



**Price of a barrel
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INSIDE TODAY WORLD NEWS

NO DEMOCRACY



Chairman of the National People's Congress Wu Bangguo, front, reads work report at the second plenary session of National People's Congress in Beijing's Great Hall of the People, China, Monday, March 9, 2009.

See *INTERNATIONAL NEWS*

SPORTS NEWS

CAPTAIN AMERICA



United States' Derek Jeter scores during the sixth inning against Venezuela in a World Baseball Classic game in Toronto on Sunday, March 8, 2009. The United States powered its way into the second round of the World Baseball Classic by beating Venezuela 15-6 on Sunday.

See *Sports Today*

Aruba showcased at Savor Dallas food and wine extravaganza

ORANJESTAD / DALLAS - The Aruba Tourism Authority participated in a very high profile weekend extravaganza event.

The Savor Dallas event was a unique wine and food extravaganza that took place this past weekend in Dallas, Texas on Friday, March 6 and continued through Saturday, March 7, 2009. Radisson Resort's top chefs and the legendary Buccaneer Restaurant attended the annual Savor Dallas event.

The 4 diamond Radisson Resort Executive Chef Hector Espinoza and Sunset Grill's restaurant Chef Maarten Smeets cooked up a savory pulled pork with a chimichurri sauce with tostoni's (fried plantains) with each plate beautifully adorned



with dendrobium orchids. This famous dish was also a

marvelous entrée served at the York last year. James Beard house in New

Continued on Pages 4 & 5

MCB restrains personal loans



WILLEMSTAD--"When it became clear that the worldwide economic recession would hit our islands in the hotel and restaurant sector as well as some in sections of the international

financial services, MCB decided to restrain the granting of personal credit in the last part of 2008. It's in the interest of our customers themselves," states Maduro & Curiel's Bank (MCB), the parent company of Windward Islands Bank in its 2008 annual report.

Continued on Page 11

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The annual Papiamento Restaurant/Wente Vineyards happening

A fun golf tournament with a truly charitable twist



ORANJESTAD-The annual Papiamento Restaurant/Wente Vineyards Golf Tournament is coming up. Registration for this fifth anniversary event is open

and many 'regulars' have already signed up for April 4th. Always a fun event, this one-day tournament also supports a worthy cause. This time proceeds will go

to the foundation that hands out breakfast to children who go to school hungry. The foundation's name is Ban Uni Man pa Cria Nos Muchanan (Get together to

feed our children). As the need for food is growing, so is the foundation's need for financial aid.

But back to golf: as usual the happening starts off with a cocktail reception in the private garden of Papiamento Restaurant, where excellent Wente Vineyards wines will flow freely and where hors d'oeuvres are passed around. Fifth-generation Eric Wente, an avid golfer himself, will be present at the reception: he will be teaming up with Flying Fishbone Restaurant's Sven Scheider at the tournament. After all 18 holes have been played participants are treated to the popular 'soup buffet' before the prizes for the winners are handed out.

Registration for the Papiamento Restaurant/Wente Vineyards Golf Tournament is possible at Arion Wine Company (5943323), representative of Wente Wines on the island. Valued sponsors are AIB, Coldwell Banker, Deloitte, Dufry Aruba, Fantastic Gardens, Freeway, Hugo Boss, Ocean Air Express, Optica Oduber & Kan, Digicel, Valero Aruba, Zen Design, Willy's Pool Service, Fuji Water and Tierra del Sol with more to come. During the opening reception players will be approached to sign a standing order form from their bank to help sponsor food for a child. The cost per child is just AWG. 25,-- per month. □

Driftwood Authentic Aruban Seafood Restaurant offers diners the ultimate dining experience in freshly line caught fish.

ORANJESTAD - Why should seafood enthusiast and other diners alike go to Driftwood Restaurant? Well let's start by mentioning that their fish is caught daily by the owner himself and prepared by a local chef. "Just like mama makes it." The food is fresh, the staff is friendly, and the place is definitely buzzing. If you want to catch your own fresh fish and can't stay for a sit-down dinner, enjoy their Charter Fishing trip and have them prepare it for you. Trust me; it doesn't get any fresher than this: From pier to plate as their motto says.



Fried fish would be the common choice, but you can get your entrée broiled, grilled or baked. However you can indulge in the more guilty options for lobster, Alaskan king crab legs, grouper, shrimp, Black Angus tenderloin and so forth. Ease your

conscience and add a salad or go all out and try their delicious crab cakes, fish soup, garlic escargots, lobster crepe and coconut shrimps before your hearty entrée.



While seafood stars at Driftwood, fish-phobic diners will not go hungry. They have a staggeringly vast menu, which doesn't miss much of anything, from authentic Aruban seafood, lobster, Alaskan king crab legs to chicken, lamb or steaks.

Q: Why do we serve only fresh line caught fish?

A: How fresh would you be after a net caught fish frozen import from Asia?



Driftwood restaurant has a long tradition of serving the best seafood and steaks for over 20 years!

Don't forget to make this a must dine at restaurant while on vacation, you are sure to indulge in some great tasty seafood.



Restaurant information and reservation: open daily (closed on Tuesdays) from 5pm-10:30pm. Tel. 583-2515. Located at Klipstraat 12 in the heart of downtown Oranjestad, within driving distance from the resorts. □



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DRIFTWOOD CHARTERS

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Herbert 593-0368 | Herbert Jr. 592-4040 | Office: 583-2515

STEP-IT-UP "Zumba Fitness and More"

Zumbafied the Aruban Community a 100% on Friday and Saturday...



ORANJESTAD - This Past Friday and Saturday, Step-It-Up "Zumba Fitness and More", shook Renaissance Convention Center and Marketplace to the core with their 100% Zumbafied Party, with entertainment by DJ Diablo, Cool FM 98.9 and

Gold Fitness Zumba Instructor from Rochester NY. Shelley Contento-Ball. More than 500 people attended these magnificent events of Zumba Fitness at Renaissance. Step-It-Up's instructors consisting of Dwayne Wever, Naziha Adames-Ras,

Pierangley Wever, Marisol Sanchez, Ella Orman, Mary Hessels and Carol Alders moved and danced Zumba on Friday, side by side with certified gold instructor Shelley Contento-Ball, for a group of almost 300 participants inside of Renaissance Convention Center. This crew has lots of years of experience amongst them, in the world of fitness, ballet and interpretive dance. Step-It-Up made use of this event to celebrate their first lustrum here in Aruba.

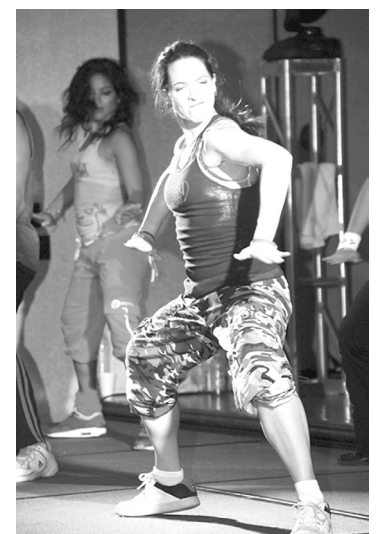
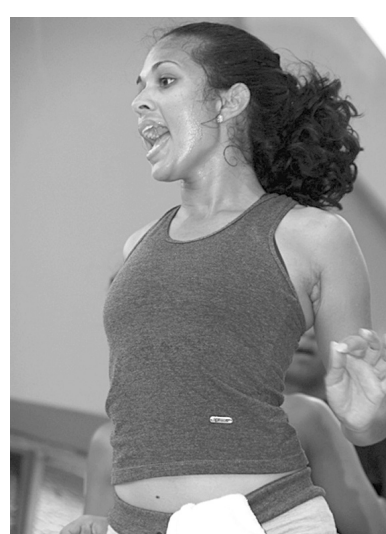
They displayed their Zumba abilities, Saturday morning as well on the roof of Maraca's at Renaissance Marketplace with a free Zumba Class for all who wanted to be part of this unstoppable movement that is Zumba. With live video broadcast by Cool FM 98.9 on www.coolaruba.com and live radio broadcast of the new show on Cool FM 98.9, called BAM (Body and Mind) by JulieJulie from 8:00 to 10:00am.

Step-It-Up, took their first Zumba steps on the 29th of February at Club Estrella, St. Cruz, and this is a year of expansion for Step-It-Up with exercise programs specially catered to our youth and elderly. By doing this they are trying to introduce a unique concept to help stimulate healthy living and movement to our Aruban Community in hands of capacitated, responsible, serious and certified instructors. And they are also introducing classes for our kids, Zumba Fitness-4-kids and dance fusion at Centro Deportivo Betico Croes.



Step-It-Up would like to thank Alex Ponson, Jason I. Margarita and the whole team of Cool FM 98.9, DJ Diablo, Julissa "JulieJulie" Rodulfo with her new program, BAM, Tera Group N.V., Red Bull, Tamara

Besaril of Body Sense, Radio Announcer Gerald Bisslik, Subway, Visser Trading with Vitamin Water and Renaissance Mall & Marketplace for their continuous support throughout these events. □



Aruba showcased at Savor Dallas food and wine extravaganza



Continued from Front Page
The Buccaneer Restaurant's Italian cook Angela Di Lorenzo Munzenhofer whipped up her famous Pasta Marinara and added a Texan touch of crawfish to the recipe on Friday evening and on Saturday she had two entrees of Pasta con Aglio e' Olio served with breaded

shrimp alla Buccaneer with lemon sauce and topped with three pepper medley. Aruba stood out amongst the large crowd which was attended by more than 4,000 people from Dallas/Fort Worth area and 14 other states across the country.. The events took place on Friday at Victory Park and



on Saturday evening at the Westin City Center was the place to be filled with 4,000 guests who attended the showcased cuisine from

more than 50 of the area's top restaurants including nearly 500 premium wines, spirits and imported beers that were available to taste.

Friday's delicious event took place at Victory Park and Saturday's event took place at Westin City Center in the heart of Downtown Dallas Texas.

The extraordinary weekend celebration was the ultimate tasting experience. It showcased cuisine from more than 50 of the area's top restaurants and Aruba played an important part. nearly 500 premium wines, spirits and imported beers are available to taste. There is also a special opportunity to interact one-on-one with internationally acclaimed experts in exciting venues. Savor Dallas is the place to learn about Chefs' best



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Victory park and Alyssa for their support on making it an incredible evening, also Steel Restaurant on Oak Lawn Ave. for an incredible evening of dining after the event at their superb Japanese restaurant. A grand applaud to Kim Riddle of the Aruba Tourism Authority who did an outstanding job at making the event a successful one and helping



ideas on fine food, and the best wine and spirits to complement fine flavors – perfectly accompanied with the beauty of the arts.

The 3 chef's of Aruba want to give a heartfelt thanks to Victory Tavern's Chef Jim for the use of his kitchen which was adjacent to

the chefs feel comfortable at what they do best. Kim was a God sent who was there at every moment from taking us to Central Market and making sure we had everything needed for a grand experience to the final evening making sure that everything was perfect. Kim you deserve an A+ for the love you have for Aruba and its people.

Kim played a big part in all of this as a spokesperson for Aruba Savor Dallas 2009. □

Photos by Bella Arruba Photography



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Shelley Contento-Ball loves L.G. Smith's Steak & Chophouse



ORANJESTAD - The Ball from Rochester NY. international Zumba was very happy with the Instructor Shelley Contento-Ball from Zumba events she was part

of here in Aruba. Shelley was aware of the big interest for Zumba in Aruba, but she was not aware of how big the demand was. During a dinner with her Husband at L.G. Smith's, the Marketing Department of Renaissance Mall & Marketplace got a good opportunity to thank her for her effort, collaboration and tips she shared with all the participants of Zumba this week.

All that attended to the events held by Step-It-Up "Zumba Fitness and More"



and Shelley Contento-Ball, expressed tremendous gratitude and satisfaction with their unique combination of dance and exercise, in a way that the participants don't even feel as if they are exercising.

Renaissance would like to remind all that Zumba continues every Saturday at 9:00 to 10:00am, and it's a free class with Step-It-Up "Zumba Fitness and More" at Renaissance Marketplace. □

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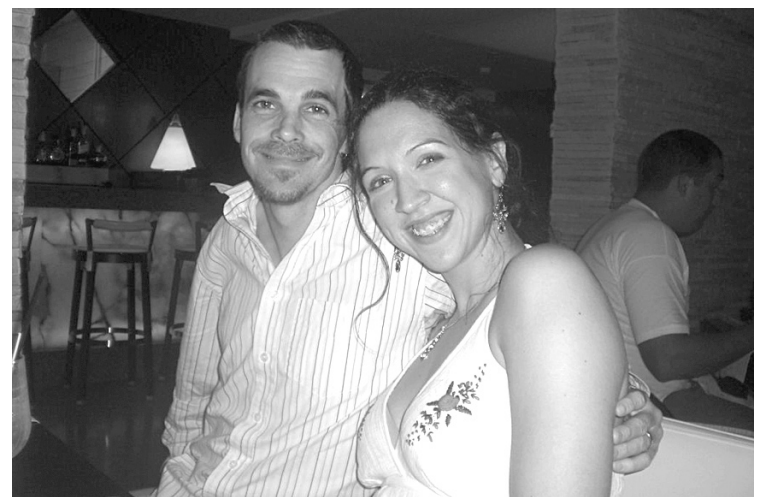
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Fifth Annual Bonaire Heineken Jazz Festival 2009

Experience Jazz All Over Bonaire at This Year's Jazz Festival.

Kralendijk, Bonaire – This year, a very popular Bonaire tradition will return to the island, when the Fifth Annual Bonaire Heineken Jazz Festival takes place on June 4 through 7, 2009. A variety of music styles will be heard around the island when internationally famous musicians mingle with the island's local bands. A Jazz & Poetry Evening will once again kick-off the festival on Thursday, June 4, 2009, with the romantic backdrop of Fort Oranje.

Gabby Saleh and his quartet and the Cabocoa Trio, all local artists, pave the way for Denise Jannah, a Surinam/Dutch female vocalist who was the festival's leading artist in 2004. On June 5th and 6th, 2009, there are two main concerts which will be held at the Topsy Seagull Restaurant, on the beach at the Plaza Resort Bonaire where The Monty Alexander Quartet, The Hans Dulfer band, Denise Jannah with a quartet from Curacao, Alfredo Naranga (Venezuela) will be joined by the ten-musician Latin Jazz Salsa Band, the Dikazz Group (Bonaire), and the Silver Bullet Steelband (Bonaire).

After each concert on these evenings, jam sessions with the festival musicians will begin at midnight at Sense, close to Plaza Resort for those who go on into the wee hours. On Sunday, June 7th, 2009, there's another event, back by popular demand: The exciting Jazz Brunch at Dive Flamingo Beach Resort & Casino presented by local and festival musicians. Thanks go to event sponsors: Heineken, Littman's Jewelers, Rocargo & IFC, It Rains Fishes Restaurant, Telbo, Caribbean Homes & Yachts, Maarten Maartense, Plaza Resort Bonaire, Divi Flamingo Beach Resort & Casino, Bonaire Fun Travel, Ennia and MCB Bank. Located eighty-six miles east of Aruba, the Dutch Caribbean island of Bonaire offers year-round sunshine, low annual rainfall, pristine coral formations and the most thriving fish population in the Caribbean. Ideal for adventurers, explorers and sun-worshippers alike, Bonaire offers myriad eco-adventure activities including

world renowned scuba diving and snorkeling, windsurfing, kiteboarding, mountain biking, sea and mangrove kayaking, horseback riding, nature tours, hiking, bird watching, sailing and deep sea and bone fishing. And with a selection of accommodations ranging from full-service oceanfront resorts and condominiums to guesthouses and small inns, Bonaire has something for

every lifestyle and budget. Bonaire is the recipient of the prestigious Islands Magazine/Caribbean Tourism Organization 2008 Sustainable Tourism Award and continues to be recognized as one of the top destinations worldwide for its sustainable tourism as reported by National Geographic Traveler magazine (March 2004) and Islands Magazine (December 2007), and as one

of the top diving destinations in the Atlantic/Caribbean for seven years in a row in the Scuba Diving magazine's Readers' Choice Awards (2003-2008). It was designated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as having the healthiest reefs in the Caribbean (January 2008), and as the Favorite Dive Destination in the World by About.com (June, 2008).

In 2009, the island will be Celebrating Bonaire's Commitment to Conservation, commemorating the 40th Anniversary of Washington-Slagbaai National Park and the 30th Anniversary of the Bonaire National Marine Park. There will be a variety of festivities and events throughout the year, celebrating these combined years of nature protection for the island. □



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Beachside Dining in that 'just right' atmosphere Sunset & Dinner at Matthew's tonight



Located at Casa del Mar resort in Eagle Beach, Matthew's is the brain child of Stefan Legger, who owned and operated Rumba Bar & Grill for 6 years. Matthew's redefines the concept of a beachside restaurant, delivering an exquisite blend of fine dining and comfort food with that 'sand on your toes' feeling. The staff is extremely friendly and demonstrate very clearly that they are there for one thing; you. Also being a very wanted venue for events and weddings, it very advisable to call and make a reservation, but if you want to just give it a go, no problem. Matthew's has a great bar which

will keep you abreast of all the action, whether it's sports on one of their 3 TV's, or what cocktails the bartenders can whip up for you. Besides breakfast, lunch and dinner, Matthew's offers all you can eat spareribs on Tuesdays, Champagne brunch on Sundays and of course their famous daily happy hours with live music at the bar.



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Have a WHALE of a Good Time tonight at Moby Dick's

PASEO HERENCIA – Moby Dick's has one mission; to take you to the depths of the blue ocean to taste some of the most exquisite dishes to come from the deep. What a truly beautiful restaurant this is, and what a unique interior to match. The inside is studded with artwork, amazing glass carvings, and both floors are dominated by gigantic fountains, with water running from ceiling to floor along multicoloured lit fibre optic cables.

The stairway is lined by an impressive painting which runs along the complete wall. The menu promises to be a true seafood lovers dream. Lobsters, fresh fish fillets, shrimps, Moby Dick's has everything on the menu. There is of course a land lubbers section for those who are so disposed. The wine list is impressive to say the least, and the cocktails are definitely worth a taste.

Casa Tua makes the perfect Pizza... Period

A recipe perfected over thirty years

Casa Tua draws a crowd of local and not-so-local folks who can't seem to get enough of the pizza and the place. There's almost always a wait here, even if you have reservations, so place yourself at the bar with the smell of brick oven pizzas wafting to other tables, and knowing that at some point, that bliss will be yours.

Al fresco dining is designed with a chicly rustic feel. The atmosphere is cool and relaxed, "Casa Tua" meaning "Your Home" in Italian. With a Sicilian-style thin crust, dripping with cheese and fresh-made tomato sauce, this pizza comes with a variety of toppings in the meat and veggie categories. Pasta dishes, full Italian meals like Lasagne and veal Osso Buco, fresh salads and rich desserts are also on the menu.



Casa Tua's famous secret thin crust recipe was handed down by an Italian chef, known locally as "the pizza master", in the French student city of Montpellier in 1969. This recipe has been perfected over the years to such a point where Casa Tua is known on the island these days for the best pizza. Period.

*Casa Tua Palm Beach open from 5pm to 11pm.
Casa Tua Downtown open from 11am to 11pm, on Sunday from 5pm to 11pm.*
For more information or reservations
Palm Beach: 586 8470
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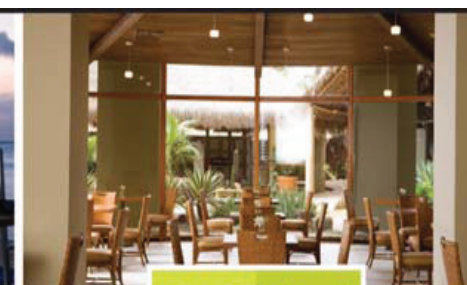
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(Tournaments are subject to charge as per Management criteria)

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Aruba Marriott Resort Celebrates \$50 Million Makeover with a Re-Launch Party



Rob Smith (CEO of AHATA), Warren Stanley (General Manager De Palm Tours), Rick Zeolla (General Manager and Vice President Aruba Marriott), Peter Keijzer (General Manager Stellaris Casino), and Corey Guest (General Manager Marriott's Ocean Club).



Lucky winner Lidia Jong of RBTT bank together with John Woolley Dir. of Sales & Marketing, Abigail v/d Linden (Sales Coordinator) and Chela De Lannoy (Senior Sales Manager).



PALM BEACH - On Friday March 6, 2009 the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino's management team



invited representatives their top local customers as well as press members to a special re-launch celebration party in the Grand Ballroom. Upon their arrival, all invitees were treated to a welcome "re-launch" cocktail, especially created for the occasion. Displays with the latest photography on flat screens on thrones and a huge plasma screen formed an interactive décor while at the same time showcasing the brand new look of the Resort.

The beach front Aruba Marriott Resort underwent a \$50 million makeover that basically left nothing in the hotel untouched. The 18 month project resulted in 411 fully renovated and refurbished guest rooms, including hospitality savvy technology and plush bedding. The Lobby received an overhaul and changed its lay-out completely with a brand new look for the Lobby Bar, 24-hour Lobby Café as well as Ketsu Sushi Bar. Another eye-catcher is La Vista Restaurant, now fully expanded and serving a la carte as well as buffet specials for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Brand new additions to the Resort included Ruth's Chris Steak House, renowned for its sizzling steaks, as well as a hotel within a hotel on the 8th floor called Tradewinds Club, offering perks and privileges such as a private lounge and personalized service.

"The fact we have a brand new



Resort to welcome our guests called for a celebration! We also wanted to say 'a big thank you' to our local and loyal customers for bearing with us while we were going through the renovation process which is never easy. We're delighted with the end result and wanted to share that first hand with our special guests", commented host to the re-launch cocktail party, John Woolley.

At the re-launch party guests could experience a taste of the hotel's various restaurants such as the tasty Italian pizzas of La Vista, delicious lamb chops of Ruth's Chris Steak House,

fresh tuna sashimi of Ketsu Sushi Bar and petite burgers of Champions Sports Bar. After a word of welcome by Director of Sales & Marketing John Woolley, the invitees awaited a special surprise. During a special raffle, lucky winner Ms. Lidia Jong of the RBTT Bank won a great prize that gives her access to a 3 nights stay at the New York Marriott Downtown, dinner for two at the rotating restaurant The View located on the 45th floor of the Marriott Marquis, tickets to the Top of the Rock, Madam Tussauds Wax Museum and Circle Line Cruises. □





MCB

Continued from Front Page

MCB has not experienced the negative results of the financial and banking crises that hit so many banks in the US, Europe and Asia as yet. The bank anticipates that the worldwide economic recession -which it explicitly separates from this banking crisis -will also reach the Dutch Caribbean islands in the next 12 to 24 months.

MCB doesn't rule out that this will also put pressure on its results in the next two years. St. Maarten and Aruba are already noticing the crisis, explains management.

The bank is therefore very careful with its expectations for the future. "We know that this year and also the next is going to be a challenge for us, and it is for all the economies of the entire world and for the entire global financial system."

MCB, which is very active with personal and mortgage loans, has restrained the granting of loans: "We give advice on taking out personal loans and we increased our requirements for granting mortgages."

The MCB top explains that since the fourth quarter of 2008 until now, the bank hasn't run aggressive campaigns in the media in which a cash prize is raffled amongst the customers who take out a loan. However, there is an action for loans for "people who ran into problems, because, for example, the washing machine or car has broken down. MCB says it's convinced "that this is what a responsible company needs to do under these special circumstances."

Not many personal loans were taken out in the last quarter of 2008. During the entire year, only 5,500 personal and car loans and mortgages were contracted for an amount of more than 150 million guilders. The number of personal loans did indeed grow, but by "just" 4 per cent, which is, according to the bank, a result of the above-mentioned policy.

The commercial loans increased considerably by

9 per cent. A total of 746 new commercial loans were contracted in Curaçao for a total of 235 million guilders.

"Instead of applying ourselves to personal loans and mortgages, we spent a whole lot of time on the development of our team and the methods of granting loans to small- and medium-sized businesses, in which we are the market leaders."

The net loans and advances to customers increased by 7.5 per cent and exceeded the three-billion-guilder mark for the first time. The loans increased the most on Bonaire and the least in St. Maarten.

The market share of commercial loans in Curaçao increased, while that in personal loans and advances dropped slightly. The market share of loans in Bonaire almost remained the same, but it decreased slightly in St. Maarten and increased drastically in Aruba.

Despite this growth, the interest income dropped from 323.52 million in 2007 to 320.01 million in 2008. This is because this item also includes investment interest. The interest on foreign investments has dropped considerably.

"After the financial crisis hit in mid-September of 2008 MCB -same as the banks around the world- dedicated itself to being as secure as always for our depositors, for our personnel and for our shareholders. Risk management, counterparty risk, investment advice to our customers by our Private Client Service division and analysis of pros and cons were of the order of the day.

"The Netherlands Antilles and Aruba can count themselves lucky that the most of the crisis remained far from our coasts and we have confidence that it will stay like this. We were spared from the biggest impact of the financial storms, thanks to a combination of professional and intellectual considerations by Central Banks of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, and an in general conservative approach on commercial and personal banking business by the banks on all the islands for the Caribbean part of the kingdom.

"The complaints in the past, namely that the local banks are 'too conservative,' appear to have been unjust. We can safely say that we have experienced a year in which the biggest financial and

economic crisis has occurred since the Great Depression, in which governments and central banks worldwide had to divert instruments to protect their financial institutions and their economies by taking measures that not even a few months before could have been considered a realistic scenario," says NCB.

MCB has booked a net-profit of 144.85 million guilders after taxes (but before the transfer to the Reserve for General Bank risk), an increase of 36 per cent compared to 2007. There was a one-time windfall by the selling of stocks, but not even including this a profit growth of 12 per cent was achieved.

The consolidated assets of the MCB Group increased by 477 million guilders, 9.6 per cent, and at the end of the year stood at right under the five-and-a-half billion guilder limit. Customer deposits increased by more than 343 million guilders (7.9 per cent) in 2008.

The balance of the current accounts increased by 16.3 per cent, while savings increased by 5.7 per cent. Personal deposits increased by 5.6 per cent, while commercial and other deposits increased by 9.4 per cent.

The MCB Group consists of 15 companies that operate onshore and internationally from Curaçao, Aruba, St. Maarten, Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius. Spread over the six islands of the Caribbean part of the Kingdom, the bank had 1,471 people working per December. Saba got its first establishment of MCB in 2008.

The new Sales and Service structure and culture of the MCB-offices have been implemented in all the offices in Curaçao and Aruba at the end 2008. This is also going to be introduced in Bonaire and St. Maarten. MCB hopes to celebrate the inauguration of its new headquarters in Bonaire, while the one in St. Maarten is going to be expanded.

The construction of the 'Banking Centre' at Rooi Catootche in Curaçao will start soon. The bank in Aruba is still in the preparation phase for the building of a new office and a new headquarters. Expectations are that all the preparations have been completed.

MCB made 4,000 donations last year, for a total amount of almost three million guilders □

Bob Wit comes to St. Maarten's aid

THE HAGUE—Justice Jacob "Bob" Wit of the Caribbean Court of Justice has written a letter to Member of Dutch Parliament John Leerdam in which he is highly critical of actions and statements of the Dutch Government and Second Chamber.

Wit said it was true there was still a lot of homework for St. Maarten, but also said the island had been showing a lot of goodwill to secure a proper state of law for country St. Maarten.

According to Wit, it is clear to everyone that improvements are direly needed in St. Maarten. That is exactly the reason the people voted for country status in the June 2000 referendum, he said in his letter of March 5.

He said the prejudices of Dutch politicians, who constantly refer to the island as a "problem child," against St. Maarten needed to be "mitigated drastically" if they wanted to be "fair" to the St. Maarten people.

It was St. Maarten that pressed to include the possibility of a complete constitutional review in its Constitution. "As a result, St. Maarten has placed its government and legislation under review by the judiciary (the Courts, ed.) and consequently under the rule of law," said Wit, a former member of the Court of Justice of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. St. Maarten did this despite the Netherlands' resistance.

Wit also said St. Maarten was right to ask for its own Attorney General in the negotiations to become a country, as this would only enhance maintenance of law and order. "I am not saying that Dutch politicians should not look critically at St. Maarten. Certainly not. But basic fairness and with this integrity and accurate thinking would be fitting politically," Wit said.

Where it comes to crime in St. Maarten, another concern of The Hague, there is much room for improvement, stated Justice Wit. "But that doesn't mean all is lost," he said. He cited a recent report by the US State Department in which St. Maarten was lauded for taking the threat of being a "staging ground for moving cocaine and heroin into the US market" seriously by "initiating joint US cooperative investigations and adopting new law enforcement strategies to combat the problem."

Speaking about official corruption in relation to drug trafficking, the US State Department stated in its report that St. Maarten "continued an aggressive and notably successful programme to identify certain links from prominent traffickers in the region to law enforcement officials, which prompted additional investigation in the region."

Justice Wit said in his letter to Curaçao-born Leerdam that he was concerned about the tone of voice of Members of the Dutch Parliament where it came to the new constitutional structure in the Kingdom. "It seems to me that the majority of your colleagues have no idea what they are talking about. They also seem to be playing with fire," he said.

As for the suggestions by some Members of the Dutch Parliament that the "public entity" construction for the BES islands Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba was the best option, Wit referred to the situation in Guadeloupe.

"Maybe you could bring that to the attention of your colleagues. Recent history on the French islands shows us that it is not as easy as many on your side of the ocean seem to think. You and I know that Curaçaoleans and St. Maarteners are different from Dutch people," he said.

Leerdam stated in a reaction Sunday evening that he had not received the letter from Justice Wit yet, but that he had been sent a copy by friends in Curaçao.

About criticism voiced by Wit towards his colleagues, Leerdam said he was not keen on responding to opinions of his colleagues in Parliament. He said that if Wit wanted to discuss the functioning of Parliament's Permanent Committee for Antillean and Aruban Affairs, he should send the letter to the committee's chairman. □

Local activists say

Adaptation of AIDS virus nothing new

PHILIPSBURG--While the rapid adaptation of the AIDS virus across large groups of people continues to be a concern to local activists, they say it is nothing new.

A recent Reuters article alluded to a study by a group of researchers which showed that the virus is fast adapting to avoid triggering the human immune system, posing another challenge in the search for a potential vaccine. Scientists know the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, constantly mutates within individual people to find ways to attack cells.

In an invited comment on the study, President of the St. Maarten AIDS Foundation Dr. Gerard van Osch and St. Maarten's HIV/AIDS Programme Manager Suzette Moses-Burton said the fact that the virus adapts is not new.

"This really doesn't surprise me. For many years the scientific community has maintained that HIV is a smart virus, quite possibly one of the smartest viruses known to man," Moses-Burton said.

"Throughout the years we have seen how within the body the virus continues to mutate, which is one of the reasons that we have continued to stress prevention for positives in our prevention messages. We have always known that the strain of the virus that a person is infected with mutates

over time, especially after the introduction of (antiretroviral drugs) ARVs, which causes even further mutations.

"We have also been concerned about the development of drug-resistant strains (similar to Tuberculosis). It should therefore come as no surprise to anyone working in this field that in the pursuit of the development of a vaccine this would be one of the issues with which we would have to contend," Moses-Burton said. "Interesting stuff, but not new," adds Van Osch. "We have known for a long time that the virus is adapting very quickly, also changing within a person constantly. This makes it so difficult to keep under control," he said.

There is no cure for AIDS and 33 million people globally are infected with HIV. Some 1,812 are known to be living with HIV/AIDS in the Netherlands Antilles up to 2007: 579 in St. Maarten; 1,184 in Curaçao; 32 in Bonaire; 7 in Saba and 10 in Statia.

The study published in the Journal Nature suggests changes that help the virus do this are increasingly passed on in the wider population.

"What was previously clear is that the virus could evolve within each infected person, but that doesn't really matter from a vaccine perspective if the virus at the population level is staying the same," Philip Goulder, an immunologist at

Oxford University who led the study was quoted as saying in a recent Reuters report. The implication is that once we have found an effective vaccine, it would likely need to be changed to keep pace with the rapidly evolving virus."

Cocktails of drugs can control the virus and keep patients healthy. AIDS has killed more than 25 million people since the early 1980s, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa.

Researchers are trying to find vaccines that either prevent infection or would control the virus, so that patients are less likely to transmit it -- a so-called therapeutic vaccine.

HIV attacks the immune system, the body's natural defences. Like other viruses, it cannot replicate on its own, but must hijack a cell and turn it into a virus factory. HIV must evade several genes to do this, including an immunity gene called HLA.

The team, which included researchers from Australia and Japan, analysed the genetic sequences of HIV and versions of HLA genes known to control the virus in 2,800 people. Some people have a version of the gene that is more protective. In the study, the researchers found that mutations that allow HIV to evade immune responses directed by HLA were more common in people with the protective variant of the gene □

According to Justice Jacob "Bob" Wit St. Maarten should have its own Attorney General

THE HAGUE--There is every reason for Country St. Maarten to have its own Attorney General and not to share this position with Curaçao, according to Justice Jacob "Bob" Wit of the Caribbean Court of Justice.

In a letter to Member of Dutch Parliament John Leerdam of the labour party PvdA, Justice Wit said he was disappointed that the Dutch Government had rejected proposals by Curaçao and St. Maarten to have their own Attorney General when they attain country status. The Dutch gave as reason that St. Maarten was too small to have its own Attorney General (Procureur Generaal in Dutch). "In my opinion that is a fallacy," said Wit.

An Attorney General, in Wit's opinion, serves as a "legal conscience" of a country. This person should possess "intestinal fortitude" and should operate totally independent of politics. "An Attorney General sees to it that everyone remains within the legal boundaries, including politicians and members of his own Public Prosecutor's Office. He cannot be a subordinate of politics, considering that he needs to have the freedom to even give ministers a slap on the wrist or even prosecute them," said Wit.

"If it were so that St. Maarten indeed wanted to be criminally active with as few disturbances as possible, the last thing it would long for is an ever present formidable person maintaining law and order. Yet, St. Maarten is reproached for wanting its own Attorney General," said Wit.

In the proposed arrangement, Curaçao and St. Maarten will share an Attorney General, whereby this person will be based in Willemstad and occasionally travel to St. Maarten, just as is the case now. "He will not be able to, as the past has shown, keep a finger on the pulse on St. Maarten," said Wit.

According to Justice Wit, St. Maarten is not too small to have its own Attorney General. He mentioned the British overseas territories like Anguilla, Montserrat, Bermuda, Turks and Caicos Islands, Cayman Islands and British Virgin Islands. "They all have their own politically independent Attorney General," he said.

The Attorney General doesn't have to be a son of the soil, but it doesn't mean that this position can't be held by a local person. He mentioned St. Maarten's former Judges of Instruction Wally Havertong and Wilfred Manning, who have functioned with "distinction" and whose integrity has never been questioned.

This, he added, was not the case with some Public Prosecutors from the Netherlands, who have been guilty of misconduct in the absence of a local Attorney General. One Public Prosecutor was even prosecuted and sentenced, Wit said, a clear reference to Cor Merx.

Supervision of justice will not improve under the new constitutional situation. It will only get worse, because the Attorney General in the new relations in the Kingdom will be even less independent, since he will have to answer to three Ministers of Justice, plus the Minister of Justice of the Kingdom (read: the Dutch Minister of Justice). "There will be more political influence on the Attorney General, instead of less," he said.

The Dutch constructions might create the impression of an efficient and decisive organisation, but in the real world they mean more bureaucracy and decreasing supervision on maintaining law and order, said Wit.

Wit said that as a former Judge in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, he knew what he was talking about, as he has locked up and sentenced various politicians. "I am not underestimating the problems, but I have learned that measures are successful when you remain fair, also when tough decisions have to be taken. That is why I am convinced that the situation in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom will never be improved if the Motherland remains in control, even if that control is limited," said Wit.

He recommended strengthening local institutions which have to keep politicians within the boundaries of proper governance, also financially. "That is the way to book long-lasting and solid results," he concluded. □



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BUSINESS

Aruba TODAY

Stocks falter as investors battle uncertainty

By SARA LEPRO,
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK – Investors fixated on the faltering economy brushed off the type of merger news that normally starts rallies.

Wall Street fell more than 1 percent Monday as uneasiness about the economy eclipsed a bounce in troubled financial stocks and news of a big drug company merger. Stocks rose in the early going but turned lower in a now familiar pattern where short-lived bursts of optimism give way to concerns about the country's economic woes.

Financial stocks rose on a news report that Bank of America Corp. could raise capital in the private sector. Shares of major banks have been pummeled to multiyear lows amid growing concern that they don't have enough cash to cover future losses despite multiple government rescues.

"Any bank right now that can raise money in the private sector, that is a major positive for the market," said Quincy Krosby, chief investment strategist at The Hartford. "It's another way to raise capital rather than the government infusing capital into the banks."

But remarks from billionaire investor Warren Buffett added to an overall mood of dejection. He said during an appearance on CNBC that the economy had "fallen off a cliff" over the past six months.

Investors even wrote off rare dealmaking as moves borne more of necessity than opportunity as drugmakers Merck & Co. and Schering-Plough announced plans to combine in a \$41 billion deal.

"Any type of news we get, the market is just skeptical," said Jon Biele, head of capital markets at Cowen & Co. "There is nothing in the near term that is going to ratchet us to a different higher level."

In the past few weeks, even when there has been better-than-expected data, the market has quickly surrendered any gains. Investors would rather dump stocks than risk place

bets on companies that don't have a sense of how they'll fare this year.

The market is also skeptical of Washington's efforts to help the financial industry and the overall economy with spending and tax cuts. And so the Dow Jones industrials haven't managed to put together two consecutive winning sessions since Feb. 5-6.

The Dow fell 79.89, or 1.2 percent, to 6,547.05.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 6.85, or 1 percent, to 676.53, while the Nasdaq composite index fell 25.21, or 2 percent, to 1,268.64.

The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies fell 7.79, or 2.2 percent, to 343.26.

About five stocks fell for every two that rose on the New York Stock Exchange, where consolidated volume came to 6.21 billion shares, compared with 7.21 billion shares on Friday.

Both the Dow and the S&P 500 have fallen more than 25 percent this year. The Dow is at its lowest level since the spring of 1997, and the S&P 500 is at its lowest point since the fall of 1996. The Nasdaq, meanwhile, is at a six-year low.

"There is really not very much for the market to sink its teeth into," said Steve Sachs, director of trading at Rockville, Md.-based Rydex Investments.

That includes a lack of solid evidence that a recovery might be starting, especially with job losses of more than half a million each month. It's also widely expected that big financial companies will still need bailouts above the hundreds of billions of dollars they've already received.

Consumer and business confidence remain at drastically low levels, and the daily headlines about the economy, the stock market and the financial industry are making matters worse.

Although many traders contend the selling is overdone, investors are still hesitant to look for bargains.

Meanwhile, the string of losing

days is costing investors. The Dow Jones Wilshire 5000 index, which reflects nearly all stocks traded in America, is down 24.5 percent this year. That equates to a paper loss of \$2.7 trillion.

Investors were unimpressed with Merck's offer for Schering-Plough. Merck has offered Schering-Plough shareholders \$10.50 in cash and just over half of one Merck share for each of their shares. The price represents a 34 percent premium to Schering-Plough's closing stock price on Friday. A combination between the two companies had long been speculated.

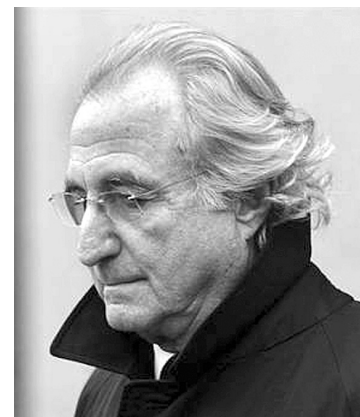
Merck dropped \$1.75, or 7.7 percent, to \$20.99, while Schering-Plough rose \$2.50, or

14.2 percent, to \$20.13.

Genentech rose \$1.77, or 2 percent, to \$92.63 after The Wall Street Journal reported the company is close to striking a deal for a \$95-per-share sale to Switzerland's Roche, the company's cancer drug partner. On Friday, Roche increased its bid to \$93 per share, or \$45.7 billion, after its \$86.50-per-share offer failed to gain shareholder support.

The companies have been going back and forth since July, when Genentech rejected a \$89-per-share bid as too low.

Among financials, Bank of America jumped 61 cents, or 19.4 percent, to \$3.75. Wells Fargo & Co. rose \$1.36, or 15.8 percent, to \$9.97. □



Bernard Madoff leaves US Federal Court after a hearing regarding his bail on January 14, 2009 in New York. An international alliance of lawyers representing victims of alleged Wall Street fraudster Bernard Madoff was to meet Monday in New York as expectations grew that the disgraced financier will plead guilty.

(AFP/File/Timothy A. Clary)

Dow moves forward on buyout of Rohm & Haas

The Haas family trust and Paulson & Co., will take a \$2.5 billion stake in preferred shares issued by Dow. In addition, the Haas family will make an additional investment of \$500 million at Dow's option.

Dow will be able to apply those funds toward the acquisition instead of drawing the money down from an existing bridge loan. Dow still plans to draw as much as \$10 billion from the loan.

Dow first announced the deal last summer, saying the specialty chemical maker Rohm & Haas would provide a buffer against the volatility in commodity prices.

Rohm & Haas has a portfolio of chemicals used in high-end items like perfumes and hull coatings for boats. Made in small batches, specialty chemicals bring high profits and are not as susceptible to volatile commodity prices swings, like the chemicals Dow makes in huge quantities.

But a severe downturn in the economy has already forced Dow to shutter 20 plants and lay off 11 percent of its work force.

Rohm & Haas has cut 900 jobs since the announcement.

Part of Dow's problems come from the collapse of a major deal in December just days before it was to close.

A Kuwaiti company pulled out of joint venture from which Dow expected more on than \$7 billion in cash.

Dow was forced to cut its dividend for the first time in nearly 100 years.

Andrew N. Liveris, Dow's chairman and chief executive, said the deal as originally structured would have been disastrous for both companies.

"The other side finally realized that there was actually a real situation here," Liveris said in an interview with The Associated Press. "This wasn't someone playing games."

Dow will cut 3,500 new jobs on top of the 6,000 combined job cuts previously announced. Most of those job cuts will be at Rohm & Haas, Liveris said.

Shareholders not involved in the new equity stake in Dow will receive \$78 per share cash. Rohm & Haas shareholders will also get the proceeds from a daily \$3 million ticking fee that Dow was required to pay for not closing the acquisition after it was approved by regulators in mid-January. □



Rohm & Haas CEO Raj Gupta exits Chancery Court during the delay to the start of the Dow Chemical -Rohm & Haas trial Monday, March 9, 2009, in Georgetown, Del.

(AP Photo/Bradley C Bower)

By RANDALL CHASE and ERNEST SCHEYDER,
Associated Press Writers
GEORGETOWN, Del. – Dow Chemical reached a tentative deal Monday to complete its disputed \$15 billion buyout of Rohm & Haas. The combined company will shed thousands of additional jobs and freeze salaries this year.

Rohm & Haas shareholders will still get \$78 per share, but the company's two biggest shareholders will not get a cash payout, a concession that allows Dow to take on billions less in debt than if the deal were to close under the original terms.

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Obama's weak snort at pork

By the Monitor's Editorial Board

Earmarks buried in a \$410 billion spending bill now before Congress aren't all "pork" – spending of dubious value. And they total less than 2 percent of the bill's cost. So why would their passage be such a rite of passage for President Obama?

Many Americans seem ready for Mr. Obama to veto this bill as proof he will exercise the fiscal discipline he so often promised in his campaign and continues to advocate. They already have doubts about his \$787 billion stimulus bill that received scant review in Congress before being passed and is likely laced with poorly thought-out mandates to spend.

These earmarks add insult to injury. When will the president stand up and say thus far and no farther to such dubious spending?

The White House has said the president will sign the bill along with its earmarks – more than 8,500 items worth \$7.7 billion that members of Congress included to benefit specific projects in their home districts.

His officials argue that this bill, which completes funding for the previous fiscal year through September 2009, should have been completed under President Bush. "This is last year's business. We just want to move on," said his budget director, Peter Orszag.

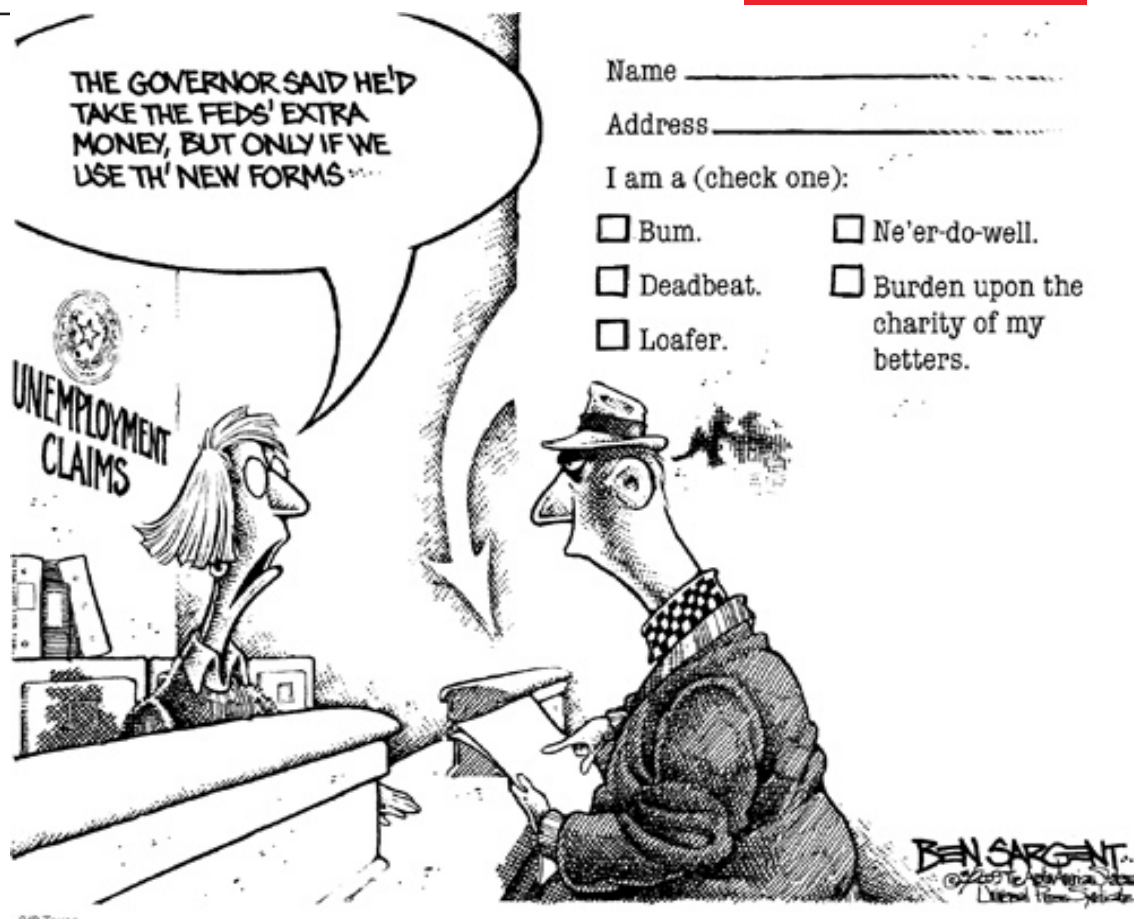
But Republicans – and a few Democrats – are doing their best to remind the president of his promise. "We need earmark reform, and when I'm president, I will go line by line to make sure we're not spending money unwisely," Obama said last October.

Yet while GOP critics of this Obama flip-flop may enjoy pounding him, they can't ignore the fact that some 40 percent of the earmarks are headed to Republican districts. And GOP senators are six of the top 10 sponsors of the largest earmarks, according to one count. There are plenty of dirty hands from both parties in this cookie jar.

Sens. John McCain (R) of Arizona and Russ Feingold (D) of Wisconsin have proposed giving the president a line-item veto, which would allow the chief executive the ability to "clean up" legislation loaded with pork, as Senator McCain put it last week.

That's not likely to get very far. Congress won't easily cede this power of the purse to a president when earmarks are such a powerful political tool for incumbents to lure campaign contributions and to be able to crow to constituents at election time, "Look what bacon I brought home!"

Yes, earmarks aren't always boondoggles. They can address real needs – funding to clean up a local river, restore a historic building, or support police. But earmarks hidden by the thousands in giant spending bills bypass the kind of scrutiny Americans expect, such as public comment periods and cost-benefits analyses that are routine for accountable lawmaking.



The Economic Blame Game

David Paul Kuhn

Bush era Republicans did not praise the poor and the working class as the engine behind the soaring housing market. Tax policy did not favor those voters to boost their spending power. Instead, a majority of George W. Bush's tax cuts went to the top 10 percent of income earners.

Yet since the stock market first crashed in mid-September, many top Republicans have largely blamed mortgage behemoths Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Fannie and Freddie have become a political euphemism for regular Americans now deemed the irresponsible beneficiaries of irresponsible quasi-government entities. After all, if Fannie, Freddie and Joe the Spendthrift are at fault, free market absolutism is absolved.

The scapegoating of Fannie and Freddie began as a campaign tactic. Not long after the market collapse, Karl Rove recommended on Fox News that the GOP ticket should spend more time emphasizing the "source of this contagion." In Rove's words, "bad stuff on Wall Street happened because people got greedy. And the greed started at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac."

It soon became a ubiquitous GOP refrain. "It's not a failure of the free market" that's "going on in the economy today," House GOP Leader John Boehner reportedly said at an October Republican fundraiser, but "the excesses of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac."

Or as Nevada Republican Senator John Ensign recently said on MSNBC's "Hardball," "Government is what caused the problem in the first place. I think the underlying probably in all of this was the housing problem," which he flatly blamed on old Fannie and Freddie.

In early September 2004, at the peak of the presidential campaign, it was Ensign again on "Hardball" proudly telling Americans "the economy is doing incredibly well." It was this optimistic view that led Ensign to go on and defend Bush's promise to restructure social security so that younger Americans could invest their retirement in Wall Street.

"Social Security just doesn't return a good enough investment," Ensign said. "Pension systems, state pension systems do. We ought to model Social

Security reform on something like that."

These same pension funds have tumbled today. States like Florida regrettably invested hundreds of millions of dollars in failed Wall Street giants like Lehman Brothers.

But back during the 2004 campaign, Ensign's home city of Las Vegas was benefiting more than most from the housing boom. It was at a Las Vegas rally attended by Ensign, late in the campaign, that Bush declared, "I believe our country can and must be an ownership society."

That ownership society depended in part on a low interest rate and easy loans. It was also inextricably tied to the same Wall Street that was inflating the housing market. Banks and rating agencies got rich by disguising bad credit risks with good credit ratings. Subprime mortgages were bundled into mortgage-backed securities. Bankers then sold these snake-oil securities as an investment to willing buyers.

Fannie and Freddie were part of the problem. Both companies lowered their standards to offer home loans to Americans who traditionally could not afford them. But they were following Wall Street bankers who first loosened their lending standards. Those loose standards became a catalyst for the subprime industry.

Even Alan Greenspan told Congress in October that these bundled subprime mortgage securities were "undeniably the original source of the crisis."

This fact has put Republicans in a bad place. A GOP credo since the early 20th century has been that free markets work best when entirely free. But in the same respect that traffic lights do not curtail freedom but ensure an efficient road system, reasonable market controls ensure an efficient economy. Last month the rant of CNBC commentator Rick Santelli against the government aiding the "losers" who could not meet their mortgage payments struck a chord for the same reason conservative criticism of welfare once did. By the 1970s, it was perceived that welfare provided a lifestyle for the idle poor comparable to that of the working class. Naturally, those who were working resented others getting a free leg up. □

Sunset Grille, a prime Steakhouse also offering Spa Cuisine



PALM BEACH – The Sunset Grille at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa needs no introduction. The award winning American steakhouse with its chic, cosmopolitan atmosphere headlines Prime Beef, the highest grade U.S.D.A -- only 2% of all beef is graded prime, required to age a minimum of 4 weeks. While steaks and chops make up the heart of the menu, the resort's Executive Chef Matt Boland and restaurant Chef Maarten Smeets innovated

unparalleled appetizers and extraordinary desserts, which helped the Sunset Grille achieve the Triple AAA's elite four-diamond status – a rare feat for steakhouses. Sunset Grille well-known as the number one steakhouse in Aruba offers also spa cuisine, for the health conscious visitors, featuring appetizers, salads and a wide array of seafood selections. The spa cuisine dishes are balanced by enhancing flavors with citrus, spice and

herbs and taste is elevated by marinating, smoking and grilling, Smeets explains. "We now use many more herbs, vegetables, grains and fibers," adds Boland, "all designed to sustain a healthier life style; and we stay away from saturated fats and refined sugars, as well as use salt sparingly," he informs. "The Sunset Grille kitchen," Boland reveals, "uses no trans fats, and our guests," he banters, "stay healthy, wealthy and wise with our new and exciting spa cuisine."

Among the patrons favorite dishes are, the Sunset Grille's famous Chop House Martini Salad, "Shaken not Stirred;" the lobster bisque with a pastry crust, the various cuts of prime beef, the popular Rack of Lamb, Stuffed Quail and the delicious Veal Oscar. The spa cuisine features items such as Tuna Tataki, the Spinach Salad, Chilean Seabass, grilled Swordfish and the Asian style Salmon and Scallops served with the



popular Soba Noodles.

The Sunset Grille always endeavors to exceed guests' expectations by purchasing the very best products available and preparing them in accordance with a combination of "tried and true" as well as cutting edge contemporary methods, Boland explains.

Simply put, the Sunset Grille culinary team buys the best products, and cooks them the best way they know, refusing to cut corners, especially when it comes to buying, aging and



cutting meat. No wonder the readers of Caribbean Travel & Life named it the top restaurant in the Caribbean. □

Life's a Beach at the Juggling Fish

Palm Beach -- The Juggling Fish at Playa Linda Beach Resort is designed to stimulate your shopping instincts, as the beautiful store is hard to resist. What you'll find on the oceanfront boardwalk is absolutely gorgeous: hand picked gifts, souvenirs, beach and resort wear, it's all on display a few steps from the water.

The tastefully arranged store is signature Jodi Tobman-Hagedoorn, the Boston-born owner of one other Juggling Fish store at the Aruba Beach

Club. You will find a great selection of kid gifts here. In fact an entire inner section is dedicated to gifts with a tropical appeal for babies and toddlers, among them whimsical plush stuffed iguanas, parrots and seahorses. Moreover, a bonanza of fridge magnets, hand-made silver jewelry, batik beach wraps, throws and hats also awaits you.

Gift hunters will be pleased with the array of scented candles and candleholders. The store offers convenient barefoot



browsing possibilities and is located within a short walking distance from the Hyatt Regency and the Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort.

The Juggling Fish at Playa Linda fits nicely into that resort's "Life's a Beach" philosophy. Open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday and on Sunday, when the rest of the island is at a standstill, the helpful staff at the Juggling Fish Playa Linda beach Resort is eager to serve you with a smile from 9 a.m. till 6 p.m. Tel.: +297 586 4999.

Email: orders@salamanderholdings.com □

At Papillon Restaurant in The Village

Henri Charrière would have had the time of his life



PALM BEACH - Henri Charrière, one of the world's most famous prisoners, would surely have had the time of his life at Papillon Restaurant in The Village, across from the Radisson Resort. Nicknamed Papillon because of the butterfly tattoo on his chest, the Frenchman was the first convict to escape from Devil's Island, something that nobody had ever done before. Charrière's thrilling, gripping autobiography has been the concept behind Papillon Restaurant. The décor, the decorations and especially the restrooms wink

at the thirteen terrible years Papillon spent in prison in French Guyana.

Papillon Restaurant's menu reflects the Frenchman's arduous journey to freedom: classic French dishes have been dusted with daring Caribbean flair and are a culinary journey for your taste buds. The spacious outside terrace is perfect for casual fine dining; the

iron bars, flecks of rust and stains on the walls make one very glad not to be in Papillon's shoes in the 1940's! Charrière would undoubtedly have loved 'his' place on Aruba: this is luxury living for anyone!

Papillon's opening hours are from 5 pm until midnight. The restaurant's daily specials will be explained by the staff. For reservations, please call 5865400.



Papillon RESTAURANT

Papillon Restaurant forms part of the Taste of Belgium family, which consists of the Chocolaterie in the Renaissance Mall downtown, the Bistro at the Paseo Herencia Mall across from the Holiday Inn Resort and the Taste of Belgium Catering Service, which offers perfect, custom-made solutions for any party, happening, wedding or reception that you may be planning.

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PALM BEACH - The health and calorie conscious among us need fear steakhouses no more. Whether it's a low-carb, low-fat, or even vegetarian diet you follow, Texas de Brazil Churrascaria fits into just about every dieter's menu plan.

Low carb eaters will have all their expectations surpassed with a tempting carnivorous selection of umpteen cuts of sizzling beef, pork, lamb, sausage, and poultry. The meats are prepared in the healthiest style of cooking—slow roasting—where much of the fat drips off in the roasting process, so those looking for a lower fat option to sautéing, pan frying, or deep frying will also be able to indulge.

The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers up a garden full of healthy eats on a lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the

slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but Texas de Brazil's version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, homemade soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, Texas de Brazil will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

**Restaurant
open daily**

Monday - Sat 6 pm - 11 pm
 Sunday 5 pm - 11 pm

For more information or to
 make reservations, please
 call 586-4686. ☐





In this photo released by the U.S. Navy, two Chinese trawlers stop directly in front of the military Sealift Command ocean surveillance ship USNS Impeccable in the South China Sea on Sunday, March 8, 2009, forcing the ship to conduct an emergency “all stop” in order to avoid collision. The incident took place in international waters in the South China Sea about 75 miles south of Hainan Island.

Associated Press

U.S. protests ‘harassment’ by Chinese vessels

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration vowed Monday to keep up military surveillance in waters off China and protested to China about what it called harassment of a U.S. ship doing that work last week.

The Pentagon charged that a Chinese intelligence gathering vessel and four others “shadowed and maneuvered dangerously close” to the USNS Impeccable surveillance ship in the South China Sea on Sunday, then threw obstacles in the water as it tried to leave.

In an odd twist, the unarmed Impeccable, which is operated for the Navy by civilian mariners, turned fire hoses on one vessel that came within 50 feet of it. The Chinese crew stripped to their underwear, then closed to within 25 feet.

A Pentagon spokesman called that “immature” and said the Chinese behaved recklessly and in violation of international law.

“We view these as unprofessional maneuvers,” spokesman Bryan Whitman said.

The U.S. Navy surveillance ships tow sonar equipment that probes the ocean to gather acoustic data and detect underwater threats. The craft was specifically designed to augment the Navy’s anti-submarine capability, although

military spokesmen would not be specific about the Impeccable’s duties.

The incident came just a week after China and the U.S. resumed military-to-military consultations following a five-month suspension over U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. And it came as Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi was due in Washington to meet with U.S. officials.

In Beijing, Chinese officials did not immediately respond to voicemail messages and e-mail regarding the U.S. allegations. Pentagon officials said the incident followed “increasingly aggressive” acts by Chinese ships against the Impeccable on Wednesday and Saturday and against the USNS Victorious surveillance ship on Thursday while it operated in the Yellow Sea.

“We’re going to continue to operate in those international waters, and we expect the Chinese to observe international law around that,” White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said.

A protest was lodged with the Chinese government by the U.S. Embassy in Beijing over the weekend and was repeated to a Chinese defense attache by Defense Department East Asia policy officials at a Pentagon meeting Monday.

Continued on Next Page

Obama reverses Bush stem cell restrictions



President Barack Obama signs an Executive Order on stem cells and a Presidential Memorandum on scientific integrity, Monday, March 9, 2009, in the East Room of the White House in Washington.

Associated Press

By STEVEN R. HURST

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama signed an order Monday that allows federal taxpayer dollars to fund expanded embryonic stem cell research, reversing one of his predecessor’s policies viewed by many as blocking development of potentially life-saving medical treatment.

Continued on Page B4



A woman carrying a sack of rice on her head, is flanked by Haitian-American Pop Singer Wyclef Jean, left, former U.S. President Bill Clinton, second right, and U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, as Jean’s organization “Yele Haiti” donates food in Cite Soleil in Port-au-Prince, Monday, March 9, 2009. Clinton, Jean and Ban Ki-moon are trying to refocus international attention on Haiti in hopes of luring more aid to keep the impoverished country from sliding back into chaos.

Associated Press

Bill Clinton, Wyclef Jean, U.N. chief seek aid for Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Bill Clinton and U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon sought to refocus international attention on Haiti Monday with a visit they hope will lure more aid to keep the impoverished country from sliding back into chaos.

Continued on Page b6



In this photo released by the U.S. Navy, crewmember on a Chinese trawler uses a grapple hook in an apparent attempt to snag the towed acoustic array Sunday, March 8, 2009 of the military Sealift Command ocean surveillance ship USNS Impeccable in the South China Sea on Sunday, March 8, 2009. Impeccable was conducting routine survey operations in international waters 75 miles south of Hainan Island when it was harassed by five Chinese vessels.

Associated Press

U.S. PROTEST

Continued from Page B1

The Chinese ships included a Chinese Navy intelligence collection ship, a Bureau of Maritime Fisheries Patrol Vessel, a State Oceanographic Administration patrol vessel, and two small Chinese-flagged trawlers, officials said.

The Chinese vessels surrounded the Impeccable, and two got close enough for the crew to see people waving Chinese flags and telling the American ship to leave, the Pentagon said in a statement. Not knowing what the Chinese intended, the Impeccable crew sprayed fire hoses at one ship in self defense, the statement said. "The Chinese crew members disrobed to their underwear and continued closing to within 25 feet," the statement said. Impeccable's crew radioed to tell the Chinese ships that it was leaving the area and requested a safe path to navigate, the Pentagon said.

But shortly afterward, two of the Chinese ships stopped directly ahead of the Impeccable, forcing it to an emergency stop. The Chinese also dropped pieces of wood in the water in front of Impeccable's path. China views almost the entirety of the South China Sea as its territory. China's claims to small islets in the region have put it at odds with five governments — the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

Another Pentagon spokesman, Marine Maj. Stewart Upton, said U.S. Navy ships and aircraft routinely operate in the area and that Chinese ships and aircraft routinely steam or fly nearby. "However, these actions were considerably more aggressive and unprofessional than we have seen." □



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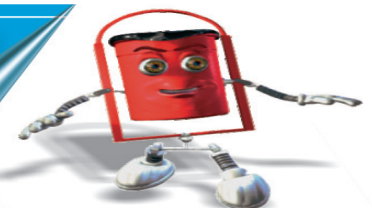
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AP NewsBreak: US extends stay of foreign athletes

By **FREDERIC J. FROMMER**
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. immigration officials have agreed to let foreign athletes extend their careers in the United States beyond a 10-year limit, as long as the athletes leave the country first and apply for a new visa.

The change came in a new policy memo issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, following months of lobbying by sports leagues and lawyers for foreign athletes. The memo, obtained Monday by The Associated Press, also came after The AP made inquiries to the agency about the limit.

The leagues and lawyers had complained that CIS recently began enforcing the 10-year limit, endangering the U.S. careers of foreign athletes. CIS officials countered that they've enforced the limit for years, which is based on a 1990 immigration law.

Foreign athletes participate in pro sports such as baseball, basketball, hockey and golf. They can come to the U.S. and play under what's known as a P-1 visa, which is for internationally recognized athletes or members of internationally recognized entertainment groups.

Under the old CIS regulations, recipients could get five years on the visa, and extend it once for another five years, not to exceed a total of 10 years.

The new policy will require foreign athletes, at the end of 10 years, to leave the country before applying for a new visa. That's not expected to be much of a burden for the athletes, many of whom return to their home country anyway in the offseason.

Major League Baseball and other pro sports were worried that the 10-year limit would put a dent in some of their players' careers, especially those who spend several

seasons in the minor leagues. While the sports couldn't point to any athletes who have been kept out because of the policy, they expressed fears that could happen any time.

The new policy memo states that P-1 athletes "are not subject to a lifetime admission of 10 years in the United States."

In the last session of Congress, MLB pushed legislation by Rep. Linda Sanchez, D-California, that would have scrapped the 10-year limit. The bill made it through the House Judiciary Committee but never came up for a vote in the House.

"It is difficult to imagine our sports leagues today without such names as Dirk Nowitzki, Dikembe Mutombo, Johan Santana, Alex Ovechkin and Vladimir Guerrero, all of whom are foreign citizens," Sanchez wrote in a "Dear Colleague" letter to lawmakers last session.



Dallas Mavericks forward Dirk Nowitzki (41), of Germany, works into New Orleans Hornets forward James Posey in the first half of an NBA basketball game in New Orleans, Thursday, March 5, 2009.

Associated Press

There were other options for players who had reached the cap, such as applying for a green card or trying for a different type of visa. For example, The AP learned that National Basketball Association star Nowitzki, a Dallas Mavericks forward now

in his 11th season, switched to an O-1 visa last year. The O-1 visa is reserved for athletes and others of "extraordinary ability," and the German-born Nowitzki is one the league's top players. But it's not an option for the average professional athlete. □

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Court refuses to expand minority voting rights



United States Attorney General Eric Holder, right, applauds Peggy Wallace-Kennedy as she shares memories of her late father, former Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace, at the Brown AME Chapel in Selma, Ala., Sunday, March 8, 2009, on the 44th anniversary of the Voting Rights March.

By MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court limited the reach of the Voting Rights Act on Monday, a decision that could make it harder for some minority candidates to win election when voting districts are redrawn.

In a 5-4 decision, the justices ruled that a portion of the law aimed at helping minorities elect their preferred candidates only applies in districts where minorities make up more than half the population.

The decision could make it more difficult for Democrats, particularly in the South and Southwest, to draw electoral boundaries friendly to black or Hispanic candidates following the 2010 Census.

With the court's conservatives in the majority, the court ruled that North Carolina erred when trying to preserve the influence of African-American voters even though they made up just 39 percent of the population in a state legislative district.

While not a majority, the black voters were numerous enough to effectively determine the outcome of elections, the state argued in urging the court to extend the civil rights law's provision to the district.

The state said the district should be protected by the section of the law that bars states from reducing the chance for minorities to "elect representatives of their choice."

Justice Anthony Kennedy, announcing the court's judgment, said the court had

never extended the law to those so-called crossover districts and would not do so now. The 50 percent rule "draws clear lines for courts and legislatures alike," Kennedy said in ruling against the North Carolina district.

In 2007, the North Carolina Supreme Court had struck down the district, saying the Voting Rights Act applies only to districts with a numerical majority of minority voters. The district also violated a provision of the state constitution keeping district boundaries from crossing county lines, the court said.

Kennedy said that, absent prohibitions like North Carolina's rule against crossing county lines, "states that wish to draw crossover districts are free to do so." But they are not required, he said. Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito signed onto Kennedy's opinion. Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas agreed with the outcome of the case.

The four liberal justices dissented. A district like the one in North Carolina should be protected by federal law "so long as a cohesive minority population is large enough to elect its chosen candidate when combined with a reliable number of crossover voters from an otherwise polarized majority," Justice David Souter wrote for himself and Justices Stephen Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and John Paul Stevens.

Ginsburg also suggested that Congress could amend the law

to cover districts like the one in North Carolina.

Civil rights groups that urged the court to uphold the North Carolina plan said such districts help to diminish racially polarized voting over time because the candidate who is the choice of black or Hispanic voters must draw some white support to win election.

In April, the court will hear a more significant challenge to another provision of the Voting Rights Act, requiring all or parts of 16 states with a history

of racial discrimination to get approval before implementing any changes in how elections are held.

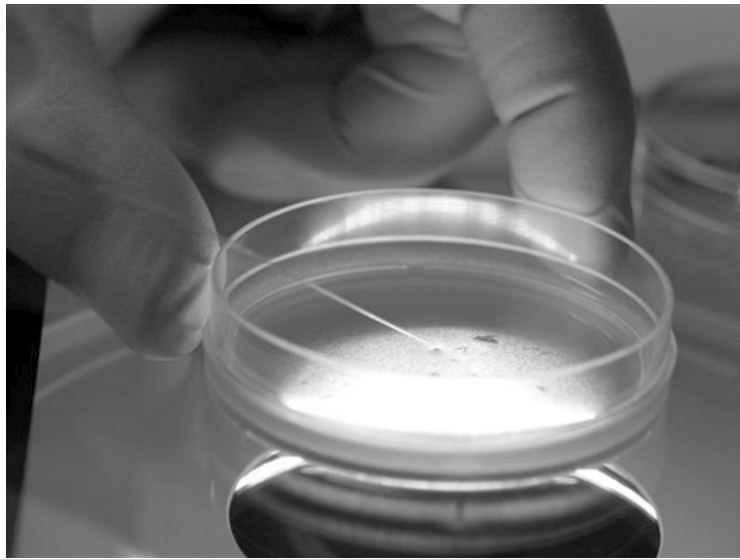
The court's familiar ideological split in this case strongly suggests that Kennedy could hold the key to the outcome in the April case as well, said Nathaniel Persily, an election law expert at Columbia University.

In another election-related case, the court let stand an appeals court decision that invalidated state laws regulating the ways independent presidential

candidates can get on state ballots.

Arizona, joined by 13 other states, asked the court to hear its challenge to a ruling throwing out its residency requirement for petition circulators and a June deadline for submitting signatures for independent candidates in the November presidential elections.

Independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader sued and won a favorable ruling from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. □



In this Oct. 22, 2008 file photo, Theresa Gratsch, a Ph.D. research specialist, expands human embryonic stem cells under a microscope at the University of Michigan Center for Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research Laboratory in Ann Arbor, Mich. The University of Michigan announced Monday, March 9, 2009 it was launching the state's first major embryonic stem cell research program since voters eased restrictions on such work in November of 2008. The university unveiled plans the same day President Barack Obama signed an executive order that ends former President George W. Bush's limits on using federal dollars for stem cell research.

Associated Press

STEM CELL

Continued from Page B1

The executive order undoes former President George W. Bush's directive that was based on his determination that using embryos to create additional stem cell lines was morally wrong and, therefore, research on those lines should not be funded by the government.

Obama, however, said he was ending what he believed was "a false choice between sound science and moral values" and opening the road for important medical research. "Medical miracles do not happen simply by accident," he said in remarks before signing the order. "They result from painstaking and costly research from years of lonely trial and error, much of which never bears fruit and from a government willing to

support that work.

The order could set in motion a significant push on research to find better treatment for ailments from diabetes to paralysis. Proponents such as former first lady Nancy Reagan and the late actor Christopher Reeve had called for ending restrictions on research spending.

"The majority of Americans from across the political spectrum, and of all backgrounds and beliefs have come to a consensus that we should pursue this research," Obama said. "That the potential it offers is great, and with proper guidelines and strict oversight, the perils can be avoided." But in an indication of how divided Americans still are on the issue, lawmakers in the southern state of Georgia

rushed to restrict the use of embryos for stem cell research in the state even as Obama was lifting limits.

On Monday, Georgia Senate Republicans pushed a bill through a key committee that would define an embryo as a person. It would ban the creation of an embryo for scientific research in the state and would also prevent the destruction of fertilized embryos for any reason.

Obama, meanwhile, called on Congress to provide the needed funding even as he asserted the order would never allow human cloning.

"We will ensure that our government never opens the door to the use of cloning for human reproduction," he said in the White House ceremony where he was joined by scientists and other supporters of the research. "It is dangerous, profoundly wrong, and has no place in our society, or any society."

Obama issued a slap at the Bush administration, declaring politics not science had driven its policy. Monday's order, Obama said, "is about ensuring that scientific data is never distorted or concealed to serve a political agenda and that we make scientific decisions based on facts, not ideology."

Bush had limited the use of taxpayer money to research using 21 stem cell lines that were created before Aug. 9, 2001. While the Obama order reverses that, it does not address an earlier legislative ban — that remains in place — precluding any federal money to researchers who develop stem cell lines by destroying embryos. □

Midwest tornadoes destroy homes, some roads flood

By The Associated Press

Strong storms including at least three tornadoes damaged or destroyed homes in parts of the Midwest, and rainfall brought fears of more misery to areas hard-hit by flooding last year.

The National Weather Service confirmed Monday that damage in Illinois and Indiana on Sunday was the result of tornadoes.

One struck Sunday in Columbia City, Ind., where three trailers were destroyed and about 20 others damaged at a mobile home park.

"I looked outside and saw a bunch of milk cartons go flying by," Don Hart said. "Then a great big sheet, about eight foot, of aluminum siding flew right next to my window."

The weather service said two tornadoes struck in central Illinois on Sunday. One damaged or destroyed about 30 structures in Laomi, Sangamon County Sheriff's Lt. Jeff Berker told The (Springfield)Journal-Register. Three people suffered minor injuries.

Another tornado destroyed a church and a farm house near Greenfield, Ill., about 60 miles north of St. Louis, the weather service said. And thousands of people lost power Sunday across central Illinois, including most of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus. In northwest Ohio, high winds tore a roof off of one house, blew the windows out of another and damaged a barn near Defiance. The weather service was working

to confirm whether a tornado had struck, meteorologist John Taylor said Monday.

Findlay, Ohio, was bracing for a possible rerun of last year's devastating flooding. The Blanchard River, which runs through downtown, rose from 7 feet Sunday to more than 15 feet by midday Monday.

The rising river closed dozens of roads and was expected to crest Monday afternoon at around 15.7 feet — more than 4 feet above flood stage. And what's worse, conditions forecast for the rest of the week are similar to February 2008, when the Blanchard crested at 16.5 feet at Findlay, city engineer Brian Hurt said. Weekend rain prompted authorities in central and eastern Iowa, still rebuilding from disastrous floods last year, to warn people in low-lying areas to move to higher ground. Water poured through a broken levee Monday along the Iowa River near Wapello, but the town itself is on high ground and not in danger. The levee had broken during last summer's flooding and was



Roofing, siding, insulation personal effects and other debris lie scattered at a trailer park in Columbia City, Ind. on Sunday, March 8, 2009. The National Weather Service confirmed a funnel cloud in the area on Sunday. About six homes were destroyed and several damaged in the area but only minor injuries were reported.

Associated Press

never repaired, Louisa County Sheriff Curt Braby said.

In Wellman, Iowa, a man was treated for hypothermia after his pickup truck ended up in a flooded ditch Sunday. A firefighter who rescued the man also required treatment.

With more rain in the forecast

across the region, officials were preparing for the possibility of further problems later in the week.

When the storm hit southern Indiana on Sunday, it threw an empty school bus atop one flattened house in Lawrence County, and at least 19 houses were damaged. Scott Ramsey said the storm hit just as he was

rushing into the basement.

"I made it about to the third or fourth step down when I got blown down to the bottom," he said.

In Bay County, Mich., high wind drove ice over seawalls and into homes along a stretch of Lake Huron beachfront. Authorities evacuated about 30 homes. □

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Aruba TODAY

China reinforces rejection of 'Western' democracy

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN

Associated Press Writer

BEIJING (AP) — The head of China's rubber-stamp parliament cited Western democracy no less than nine times in a single speech — to illustrate what the country would not become.

China will never be a multiparty state with separation of powers, he said. It will not have an independent judiciary. Elections will still have mostly government-approved candidates on the ballot.

The hard line taken by National People's Congress Chairman Wu Bangguo on Monday was an apparent response to renewed calls for political reform from inside and outside the country.

Observers are taking Wu's speech as a sign of just how reform-shy the system has become with the global economic crisis beating at China's door and a series of sensitive anniversaries approaching — including that of the bloody 1989 suppression of the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protests. Many say the supremely conservative trend is likely to long outlive



Security guards watch over delegates as they listen to National People's Congress Chairman Wu Bangguo read his work report at the second plenary session of the National People's Congress in Beijing's Great Hall of the People, China, Monday, March 9, 2009.

the current crisis.

"I don't see any progress or breakthroughs in the Chinese political system for a long time to come," said Yu Jie, a social and political critic whose writings have been banned for the past five years.

Addressing the congress' annual nine-day meeting, Wu defended

China's one-party communist system and drew clear distinctions with multiparty political systems in the West.

China, he said, would never introduce a system of "multiple parties holding office in rotation," nor would it allow a separation of powers among the legislative, executive and

Associated Press
judicial branches of government, or a legislature made up of lower and upper houses.

Though hardly new, his arguments were notably more extensive than in the past. Last year, Wu, the Communist Party's No. 2 leader, made only a passing reference to the separation of powers and a

bicameral parliament.

Wu also appeared to rule out moves toward greater judicial independence, saying the all-powerful Communist Party would continue to dictate standards and priorities that it expected courts and prosecutors to adhere to.

"The Western model of a legal system cannot be copied mechanically in establishing our own," Wu said.

Wu's remarks appeared to be a deliberate rebuttal to critics calling for greater liberalization, including legalizing opposition parties and direct elections for legislative bodies.

The boldest such call, known as "Charter '08," began circulating on the Internet in December and won endorsements from hundreds of intellectuals and pro-democracy activists both inside China and overseas. It declares authoritarian rule on the wane and calls for a new Chinese constitution, separation of powers, competitive elections and other hallmarks of Western democracy. Authorities have suppressed all mention of the document in Chinese media while harassing or detaining its drafters and signatories. □

N. Korea puts troops on alert, warns of war danger

By JEAN H. LEE

Associated Press Writer

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea put its troops on alert and cut the last hot line to Seoul on Monday as the American and South Korean militaries began joint maneuvers. The communist regime warned that even the slightest provocation could trigger war.

The North stressed that provocation would include any attempt to interfere with its impending launch of a satellite into orbit. U.S. and Japanese officials fear the launch could be a cover for a test of a long-range attack missile and have suggested they might move to intercept the rocket.

"Shooting our satellite for peaceful purposes will precisely mean a war," North Korea's military threatened in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency. Any interception attempt will draw "a just, retaliatory strike," it said.

The North has been on a steady retreat from reconciliation since President Lee Myung-bak took office in the South a year ago. After Lee said the North must continue dismantling its nuclear program if it wants aid, Pyongyang cut ties, suspended joint projects and stepped up its

belligerence rhetoric.

"The danger of a military conflict is further increasing than ever before on the Korean peninsula because of the saber rattling which involves armed forces huge enough to fight a war," the North's news agency warned as Pyongyang put its armed forces on standby for combat.

Allied commanders say the exercises are nothing more than the annual drills the two nations have held for years, while the North has been condemning them as a rehearsal for invasion.

"Our military exercises with the Republic of Korea are not a threat to the North," U.S. State Department spokesman Robert Wood said Monday, using South Korea's official name. "What is a threat to the region is this bellicose rhetoric coming out of the North."

Analysts say North Korea's heated words are designed to grab President Barack Obama's attention. With South Korea cutting off aid, the impoverished North is angling for a diplomatic coup of establishing direct ties with the U.S., said Kim Yong-hyun, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Dongguk □

HAITI

Continued from Page B1

The former U.S. president and the U.N. chief toured Haiti's run-down capital and met with officials struggling with high food prices and the enduring effects of four devastating 2008 storms. The leaders called for more foreign aid and urged Haiti's weak central government to take charge of its own development.

"We are here to mobilize international support ... but at the same time, we expect the Haitian government to do their own role," Ban told The Associated Press on Monday afternoon. With a critical, long-delayed donor's conference in Washington and elections for 12 Senate seats scheduled in April, the International Crisis Group and others have warned that Haiti's leaders must both get billions of dollars in international aid and better manage affairs at home or its short-lived period of political calm will end.

President Rene Preval has faced growing criticism for an alleged failure to lead, including not speaking out until nearly a week into last April's food price riots. The unrest led to the ouster of his prime minister, who was not replaced for months because of political bickering.

"Preval said he's providing security, but every day people are being robbed. The country is tired. We're going to make a better choice next time," said Femil Ladouceur, a 19-year-old student standing along the motorcade route.

Underscoring that tension, hundreds of people affiliated with the Famni Lavalas party of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide staged a demonstration just beyond a police cordon at the airport holding signs saying "Clinton, we need your help." Later in the day, at least 500 protesters held up signs outside the national palace reading "Ban Ki-moon, give up Aristide." □

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Hunt for splinter IRA cells overshadows Ulster

By SHAWN POGATCHNIK
Associated Press Writer

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — Gunmen hunting British security forces in Northern Ireland struck again Monday, killing a police officer just less than 48 hours after Irish Republican Army dissidents killed two British soldiers — and fanning fears of a return to tit-for-tat violence after years of fragile peace. “We are staring into the abyss,” warned a moderate Catholic politician, Dolores Kelly, after police confirmed that one of its officers was shot fatally in the head while sitting in his patrol car in the religiously divided town of Craigavon. No group claimed responsibility, but analysts and politicians blamed the Real IRA, the splinter group that admitted blame for Saturday’s fatal shooting of two soldiers who were collecting pizzas from outside an army base. Together, these were the first killings of British security forces in Northern Ireland since 1997 — the year before rival British Protestant and Irish Catholic politicians tried to leave behind decades of bloodshed by striking a peace deal that called for paramilitary disarmament and a future of Catholic-Protestant

cooperation in government. “There is little point appealing to the people who planned and did this, but all of us have to realize we are on the brink of something absolutely awful,” said Kelly, a member of a Catholic-Protestant panel that oversees the police. “All of us have to get together to pull ourselves back from the brink. A tiny handful of people with nothing to say and nothing to offer cannot be allowed to destroy so much.” So far, Protestant paramilitary outlaws have maintained their 1994 cease-fire. Before the latest attack, Protestant politicians appealed for their side’s extremists not to slay Catholic civilians in revenge for the back-to-back shootings of soldiers and police. A Protestant politician on the policing panel, Basil McCrea, said he had no doubt that IRA dissidents also committed Monday night’s attack. He said he expected the Real IRA to mount another attack, “but we didn’t think it would be so soon.” The surge in dissident violence is raising particular pressure on Sinn Fein, the IRA-linked party that is the major Irish Catholic player in Northern Ireland’s power-sharing administration with

Protestants. Protestants appealed to Sinn Fein leaders to take the next, painful step away from past beliefs and inform police about Real IRA die-hards sheltering in the most hard-line Irish nationalist districts of this British territory. Police investigating Saturday’s killings conceded they would have difficulty catching and prosecuting the two gunmen and their getaway driver unless the killers’ neighbors break Northern Ireland’s traditional code of silence on such matters. Any who do risk attacks against them and their families. “We need public support. We will do everything in our power to protect those people who come forward,” said Chief Superintendent Derek Williamson, the policeman leading the investigation. He said Real IRA sympathizers were likely harboring the killers somewhere in a Catholic district. Sinn Fein lawmaker Gerry Kelly, who once led IRA car-bomb attacks in London and the biggest prison escape in British history, said many in the party’s grass roots understood they needed to cooperate with police. But they still considered helping



A man looks at flowers, left outside the Massereene British Army Base, Antrim, Northern Ireland, Monday, March, 9, 2009. Security has been stepped up in the area following the recent attack by Irish Republican Army dissidents which left two British soldiers dead and four people injured.

Associated Press

police to arrest IRA dissidents a bridge too far. “Within the republican psyche there’s an aversion to the whole idea,” said Kelly, who pledged that Sinn Fein leaders were already challenging their own supporters to isolate Real IRA activists — if not finger them to police. “We will support the police’s investigations into this. And we will do it actively, speaking publicly,” he said. Protestant skepticism about Sinn Fein’s commitment to enforcing law and order in Northern Ireland has stunted the development of their four-party coalition. It formed in 2007 but has achieved little of substance amid incessant squabbling — particularly about justice powers. Sinn Fein wants to help

exercise control over the police and courts, but the Protestant side insists those powers should stay in British government hands in London until Sinn Fein goes beyond saying they support the police. Leaders of the Protestant side of the coalition emphasized Monday — before the killing of the policeman — that they must see hard evidence of Sinn Fein’s changed intent, with tip-offs that lead to arrests of the Real IRA unit responsible for Saturday’s attack. Nigel Dodds, whose Democratic Unionist Party represents the British Protestant majority, said Sinn Fein and IRA members must know plenty about the current membership of their Real IRA rivals. □

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Three times a week Bugaloe is the stage for live concerts. On Tuesday from 5-8pm the band JOYRIDE will celebrate sunset with hot Latin tunes. Fridays is also a big hit as LOTUS will ease out the week from 5-8pm with the greatest ballads from the 80's and 90's. MARISELA

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PALM BEACH – Fishes and More Restaurant opened up in the Arawak Gardens just 3 and a half years ago and has been a great success since day one. **PALM BEACH** – Fishes and More Restaurant opened up in the Arawak Gardens just 3 and a half years ago and has been a great success since day one. Word on the street is that once you eat at **Fishes and More**, consider yourself addicted. The owners Jeroen Kuling and Hans Heijink together with the staff Romalo, Heidi, Mariella, Denise and Chef Gerben work hard keeping the restaurant open 7 days a week from 4 pm till 11pm for everyone to enjoy. The ambience at the restaurant is out of this world, whether dinning inside in the relaxed air-conditioned



dinning room or outside on the terrace to enjoy the tropical breeze and daily live music. Most guests come in early for the **daily fresh catches**, such as Red snapper, grouper, mahi mahi, wahoo and tuna. Check with the server to find out about the Catch of the day. The chef will be more than happy to prepare your fish the way you like it best: grilled, deep-fried, pan-fried or the chef's choice. **Every Wednesday, seafood specials are prepared** depending on what the Fishermen bring in fresh out of the water that afternoon. These specials usually include fresh Caribbean lobster and pounds of peeled shrimps. **Fishes and More** is for everyone, from large groups, families, couples and even singles who can't shake the seafood addiction can stop in for a fix of Pina Colada Shrimp. For those who like to try something different or have had their fill of spectacular seafood, the chef prepares a wonderful array of filet mignon, rib eye, wienerschnitzel, veal parmesan, and pasta specialties. **Great Seafood!!!** Fun and relaxed atmosphere. Right across from the high rise hotels. It is worth the short walk to a wonderful dinner ☐



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salads, homemade soups starting at \$6 and authentic Italian lasagnas & pastas starting at just \$14. The staff at this popular eatery has set the standard on the island for the term "great service" not only with your dining pleasure, but recognized as 'the' professionals in assisting guests with the perfect cocktail, paired wine or other beverages. After just one dinner at Casa Tua, you'll know your home in this family owned eatery. Victor Nataf and his sons Daveed and Gregory are always there to welcome you with the rest of





their staff. Gregory spends most of his time in the kitchen as the head chef repeating the recipes and perfect preparations passed to him from his uncle and three siblings who are renowned for their Mediterranean flair throughout France. Of course we saved the best for last as no one does an ending better than Casa Tua with their dreamy Tiramisu, or Profiteroles au Chocolat Chaud. The best part about such a good ending is that it guarantees you'll be back for more...

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SPORTS

Aruba TODAY



Sharapova to play doubles at Indian Wells

NEW YORK (AP) — Maria Sharapova is returning to the WTA Tour this week, ending her injury absence of more than seven months by playing doubles at an event in Indian Wells, California.

Sharapova, who missed the last two Grand Slam tournaments with a right shoulder injury, will compete in doubles for the first time in nearly four years, teaming with Elena Vesnina.

What the three-time major champion isn't yet ready to do is play singles, according to her Web site.

"I am excited to be playing competitive tennis again,"

Sharapova said in a posting on her site. "The healing process takes time, and requires things to move more slowly than I would like, but I am taking things one step at a time."

Sharapova has not played competitively since pulling out of a tournament in Montreal in late July after winning a nearly three-hour match in which she double-faulted 17 times. The right-hander was examined by a trainer midway through the three-set victory, and she withdrew from the tournament before her next match.

Medical tests later found a torn rotator cuff tendon in the Russian's shoulder.

In addition to missing last year's U.S. Open and this year's Australian Open, Sharapova also pulled out of an indoor event in Paris and a hard-court tournament in Dubai last month.

The joint ATP-WTA tournament in Indian Wells begins Wednesday. □

Associated Press

In this May 31, 2008 file photo, Maria Sharapova serves the ball to Italy's Karin Knapp during their third round match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris.

Rodriguez has hipsurgery



In this Feb. 18, 2009 file photo, New York Yankees' Alex Rodriguez stretches during spring training baseball in Tampa, Fla. The Yankees star will miss up to two months after he undergoes surgery to remove a cyst from his right hip.

Associated Press

TAMPA, Florida (AP) — Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez had arthroscopic surgery Monday to repair a torn labrum in his right hip and was projected to return to the team's lineup in six to nine weeks. Dr. Marc Philippon performed the 1-hour, 20-minute procedure at Vail Valley Surgery Center in Colorado. "The surgery went exactly as we planned," Philippon said during a conference call. "No surprises." Other options

considered were a more aggressive surgery that would have sidelined Rodriguez up to four months and a conservative approach that would have included rest and treatment. "There is no doubt in our minds that this was the best option," Philippon said. "This was the best option for Alex and the Yankees."

General manager Brian Cashman expects the three-time AL MVP back on the field "sometime in May." Rodriguez will need a more extensive operation after the season, and Philippon said Rodriguez will "absolutely" be ready for spring training in 2010.

Rodriguez was expected to be released from the hospital later Monday and to start his rehab. He was to perform range of motion drills and ride a stationary bike.

"Alex is doing well," Philippon said.

"Over the next few days, until Friday, we will work on his range of motion. Hopefully by Friday or Sunday, we will start working on his muscle memory and adding range of motion that involves the rotation of a batter when he swings."

Manager Joe Girardi said the immediate start of

Rodriguez's rehab program was encouraging.

"That's pretty amazing," Girardi said after the Yankees lost 6-2 to Toronto. "That makes me feel like that the six to nine weeks is doable. The one thing about Alex, we know he's going to work and work and work. It might be a case that we have to hold him back a little bit."

Philippon said he found a small impingement and the lining of a cyst that was removed last week. The labrum was repaired.

Toronto manager Cito Gaston said the Yankees can overcome the loss of Rodriguez at the start the regular season.

"They're going to miss him, but I still think they have enough offense that they'll do fine until he comes back," Gaston.

"They will have to pitch, though. They certainly have the pitchers there that are capable of pitching well."

New York added CC Sabathia and A.J. Burnett during the offseason to stabilize its starting rotation.

The Yankees also hope catcher Jorge Posada, closer Mariano Rivera and left fielder Hideki Matsui respond from surgery and help the team get off to a fast start in the AL East. □

'Other' Busch runs away with dominating win



Kurt Busch celebrates after winning the NASCAR Kobalt Tools 500 auto race at Atlanta Motor Speedway in Hampton, Ga., Sunday, March 8, 2009.

Associated Press

By PAUL NEWBERRY

AP Sports Writer

HAMPTON, Georgia (AP) — Kurt Busch, a former NASCAR Cup champion who's been overshadowed lately by his sibling Kyle, drove to a dominating victory Sunday at Atlanta Motor Speedway.

The 30-year-old Busch led 235 of 330 laps in the Kobalt Tools 500, surviving a couple of scrapes with the wall and a late caution to pull away for

a 0.332-second victory over Jeff Gordon.

Pole-sitter Mark Martin, who had become the second-oldest driver in Cup history to claim the top spot in qualifying, had another rough day after blowing engines the two previous weeks. He apparently cut a tire, smashed the wall and finished 31st, 14 laps down.

How dominating was Busch? He led more laps in one afternoon that he did all of last season (164), when his only victory came in a rain-shortened race at Loudon, New Hampshire.

For his victory lap, Busch grabbed the checkered flag and drove backward around the 1.54-mile quad-oval. That might have been the only way anyone would have caught him during the race.

"I've got to thank my guys," he said in Victory Lane. "This car was unbelievable. I guess good things come to those who wait."

Gordon is still waiting for his first win since 2007, but he remained on top of the Sprint Cup standings after another strong run.

"We're getting close," Gordon

NHL Roundup

Crosby lifts Pens over Ovechkin's Caps in shootout

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sidney Crosby produced a goal and assist in regulation, then the shootout winner to help Pittsburgh edge Washington 4-3 for the Penguins' sixth consecutive victory and the Capitals' fourth straight loss. After Crosby lifted his shot over Jose Theodore's glove, Marc-Andre Fleury thwarted Alex Ovechkin with a kick save to end the shootout. Fleury also stopped Alexander Semin and Viktor Kozlov to help Pittsburgh complete the first 5-0 trip in franchise history. In regulation, Ovechkin scored his league-leading 47th goal, and Crosby got his 25th. Pittsburgh built a 3-1 lead as Sergei Gonchar and trade-deadline pickup Bill Guerin tallied in the second period. But Ovechkin and Brooks Laich tied it with goals only 49 seconds apart early in the third. Semin also scored in regulation.

Rangers 4, Bruins 3

At New York, Sean Avery was warmly welcomed by Rangers

fans in his first home game at Madison Square Garden in nearly a year, and newcomer Nik Antropov had a goal and assist to help New York beat Boston for its third straight win. Avery, who rejoined the Rangers this week after being banished by Dallas following crude comments he made in December, assisted on Ryan Callahan's second-period goal. Nikolai Zherdev scored the go-ahead goal with 6:22 left, and Scott Gomez also scored for New York, 3-1-1 since John Tortorella replaced fired coach Tom Renney.

Chuck Kobasew, Zdeno Chara and Michael Ryder scored for Eastern Conference-leading Boston.

Canadiens 3, Stars 1

At Dallas, Carey Price made 31 saves, and Andrei Kostitsyn, Alex Kovalev and Chris Higgins scored as Montreal killed nine of 10 power plays to beat Dallas.

With the victory, the Canadiens jumped to fifth in the Eastern Conference and improved to

4-12-1 in their last 17 road games.

Loui Eriksson had a power-play goal for Dallas. The Stars lost their sixth straight at home to match a franchise record set in 1970 in Minnesota.

Avalanche 5, Blackhawks 1

At Chicago, Peter Budaj made 24 saves, and Marek Svatos and Ryan Smyth each had a goal and an assist to help Colorado beat Chicago and end a six-game losing streak. Ben Guite, Chris Stewart, Milan Hejduk also scored, and Tyler Arnason had three assists. The six-game skid was the franchise's longest since the Quebec Nordiques lost eight in a row in January 1992. Jonathan Toews scored for Chicago.

Thrashers 5, Flames 2

At Atlanta, Bryan Little scored twice and Ilya Kovalchuk had a goal and an assist as Atlanta beat Calgary for consecutive wins in regulation for the first time since Jan. 20.

Chris Thorburn and Tobias Enstrom also scored for



Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby (87), shoots the puck past Washington Capitals' goalie Jose Theodore (60) for the winning goal in a shootout of an NHL hockey game Sunday, March 8, 2009, in Washington. The Penguins won 4-3 in a shootout.

Associated Press

Atlanta, and Kari Lehtonen made 27 saves. Jarome Iginla and Craig Conroy scored for Calgary.

In other NHL games it was New York Islander 3, Phoenix

2; Minnesota 3, Anaheim 2; Atlanta 5, Calagary 2; Colorado 5, Chicago 1; Montreal 3, Dallas 1 and New York Rangers 4, Boston 3. □



Canadian musher Sebastian Schnuelle gets a send off by the 1985 Iditarod champion Libby Riddles, left, at the start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in Willow, Alaska Sunday March 8, 2009. Schnuelle has taken an early lead in the 1,100 mile sled dog race.

Associated Press

By MARY PEMBERTON

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Canadian musher Sebastian Schnuelle took the early lead in the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, his dogs looking fresh despite a victory in a 1,000-mile race nine days ago.

Schnuelle spent just four minutes in the Finger Lake checkpoint Monday morning about 150 miles (240 kilometers) from the race

restart in Willow. Sixty-seven teams took off from Willow on Sunday.

Schnuelle, who comes from Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory, captured the recent Yukon International Sled Dog Race in record time. He said at the restart Sunday that he spent the time between races resting and eating junk food, mostly hamburgers. However, he said his dog team continued

Sebastian Schnuelle takes early Iditarod lead

to train.

He was asked about possibility of winning the Quest and the Iditarod back to back, as two-time defending champion Lance Mackey did in 2007 and 2008.

"You can never say you can win because there are so many others that can," he said. "I'm going to try."

Schnuelle, who came in 10th last year, has his work ahead. He was followed Monday by Paul Gebhardt, a two-time runner-up, and Ed Iten, who finished second in 2005. Mackey was in fourth, about two hours behind the leader.

From Willow, the 1,100-mile Iditarod trail winds through some forested hills. Mushers cross rough ice on the Susitna River and continue on the frozen Yentna River, eventually crossing a swampy area and a creek where "overflow" can be treacherous. Overflow occurs when water pushes up

on top of already frozen ice and forms another thin layer, one that is not strong enough to support the sled.

Mushers hate overflow. They tell stories of pulling their dogs and sleds to safety, hoping the stronger layer of ice will hold. Most of the top mushers are entered in this year's race, including five former champions.

Thirteen mushers are women, including Aliy Zirkle, a Quest winner competing in her ninth Iditarod. Zirkle, touted as the female musher with the best chance of replacing four-time champion Susan Butcher, was in 13th place. She says the race for her is mostly about being on the trail with her dogs. But, she added, "I think that I am still right on the cusp of winning."

The field is down to 67 teams this year, a drop from a record 96 last year. The purse also is down from \$935,000 in 2008 to

\$610,000 this year, a drop that has many mushers grumbling, especially since the entry fee was raised to \$4,000 this year and could go to \$5,000 next year. Race officials attribute the drop to too much prize money last year.

Mushers this year will have to contend with near record snowfall in some places along the trail that extends from Anchorage to the gold rush town of Nome on Alaska's western coast. The trail crosses two mountain ranges, goes along the frozen Yukon River and then extends up the Bering Sea coast to the finish line. The Iditarod was first run in 1973 to commemorate the valiant work of dog teams in 1925. The teams were sent on the trail — at that time used mainly to deliver mail and supplies to villages — to bring serum to Nome to combat a deadly outbreak of diphtheria. □

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Team United States' Kevin Youkilis (21) is congratulated by teammates Dustin Pedroia (15) and David Wright (4) after hitting a home run during the sixth inning against Venezuela in a World Baseball Classic game in Toronto on Sunday, March 8, 2009. Venezuela catcher Ramon Hernandez is at rear.

Associated Press

Dominican Republic bounces back in WBC

By OMAR MARRERO

Associated Press Writer

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Once the Dominican Republic broke out of its slump, Miguel Olivo and his teammates showed why they were one of the favorites coming into the World Baseball Classic.

Olivo homered twice and drove in five runs, and the Dominicans rebounded from a startling loss in their tournament opener by beating Panama 9-0 in an elimination game Sunday.

"Even though we are celebrating, we still have our backs against the wall," manager Felipe Alou said. "Our mood has changed and we feel that we can win Tuesday and qualify for the next round."

Nelson Cruz also homered and winning pitcher Johnny Cueto struck out five in 4 2-3 innings for the Dominican Republic, upset by the Netherlands 3-2 on Saturday in the opening game of Pool D play. Panama was eliminated from the 16-team event after it was outscored 16-0 in two games, including Saturday's defeat against Puerto Rico at Hiram Bithorn Stadium.

"Eighteen innings without a run. A team can't win like that," Panama manager Hector Lopez said.

Next, the Dominican Republic will play another elimination game Tuesday against the loser of Monday's game between Puerto Rico and the Netherlands.

"Either of them will be difficult. We know that Puerto Rico is scary and has three great starting pitchers. And the Netherlands has already beat us," Alou said. "Both are tough opponents, but we will have more energy now."

Alou said right-hander Ubaldo Jimenez will start Tuesday for the Dominicans.

After their big bats sputtered against the Netherlands, the Dominicans finally started hitting Sunday. They took advantage of two Panama miscues on defense to score three times in the third inning, capped by David Ortiz's RBI single. Willy Taveras and Fernando Tatis each knocked in a run during the rally.

Robinson Cano was aboard for Olivo's two-run shot in the fourth. Cruz hit a solo drive in the sixth, and Olivo made it 9-0 with a three-run homer in the eighth.

"This team bats well, but it must have patience. Today we were inspired," Olivo said. "There was no room for error."

Cueto gave up three hits and walked one. He got solid relief from Julian Tavarez, Rafael Perez and Tony Pena.

Starting pitcher Ramiro Mendoza took the loss, allowing five runs — two earned — and four hits in four innings.

"Things could have been different with a bit more luck," Panama slugger Carlos Lee said. □



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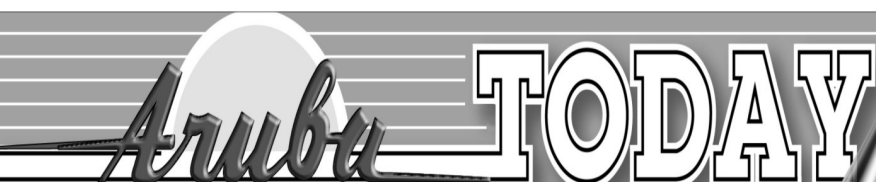
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Presidente boliviano Morales hará defensa de la coca en Naciones Unidas

LA PAZ (Reuters) - El presidente Evo Morales dijo el lunes que encabezará una delegación de productores de coca de Bolivia que demandará, en una reunión de la ONU, el retiro del arbusto de una lista de estupefacientes, desafiando convenios internacionales y a quienes condenan su uso para drogas ilícitas.

El mandatario y líder de los cocaleros informó que consideraba un “deber como presidente y como dirigente” exigir la despenalización de la coca, producto de múltiples usos medicinales y ceremoniales en varios países sudamericanos pero utilizado también para fabricar cocaína.

“Es imposible terminar con el uso tradicional de la coca”, dijo Morales a corresponsales extranjeros, horas antes de viajar a Viena, donde será esta semana uno de los actores principales en la 52a. Conferencia de Naciones Unidas sobre Drogas.

No obstante, admitió que aunque apreciaba la “sensibilidad y simpatía de la comunidad internacional”, no podía asegurar cuántos países apoyarían de inmediato la demanda de despenalización de la coca, que implicaría una revisión de una Convención de 1961 que dio un plazo de 25 años, no cumplido, para la erradicación de ese arbusto andino.

“Vamos fundamentalmente a defender a la hoja de coca, cuya defensa me llevó al Palacio (de Gobierno)”, agregó Morales, quien se presentó rodeado por una decena de dirigentes cocaleros de las regiones de Yungas y Chapare, esta

última la cuna política del primer presidente indígena boliviano.

Bolivia tenía hace un año al menos 27.000 hectáreas de cultivos de coca, lo que la mantenía como el tercer productor mundial de coca y cocaína, después de Colombia y Perú.

Una ley de sustancias controladas y acuerdos entre pasados gobiernos y los cocaleros permiten en conjunto en Bolivia unas 15.000 hectáreas de cultivos de coca con miras a atender la demanda interna para los llamados fines tradicionales. El saldo debería ser erradicado.

Morales dijo que informará a Naciones Unidas sobre el plan de “racionalización” o erradicación concertada de coca ilegal, que ejecutan el Gobierno y los sindicatos cocaleros, como “el mejor aporte de Bolivia a la comunidad internacional”.

“Ratificamos nuestra decisión de que no habrá libre cultivo de coca, pero tampoco cero cultivo de coca”, afirmó. La erradicación de cocales es financiada parcialmente por Estados Unidos, en el marco de convenios que han sido cuestionados por el Gobierno de Morales varias veces en el último año, calificándolos como intervencionistas.

En noviembre pasado, el presidente boliviano expulsó a la agencia antidrogas estadounidense, DEA, acusándola de realizar actividades políticas, el mismo motivo por el que dos meses antes había echado al embajador de Washington. □



El presidente boliviano, Evo Morales, habla en una conferencia de prensa en La Paz, 3 mar 2009. REUTERS/David Mercado (BOLIVIA)

Gobierno de Ecuador desconoce a entidad ambientalista

QUITO (AP) - El gobierno ecuatoriano decidió quitar la personería jurídica a la organización no gubernamental ambientalista Acción Ecológica, porque “ha incumplido” los fines para los que fue creada, medida considerada “inconstitucional” por la ONG.

La organización ha sido conocida públicamente desde su creación hace 20 años por oponerse radicalmente a actividades petroleras y mineras e incluso ha protagonizado protestas junto a otros grupos sociales e indígenas.

Según una resolución emitida el 2 de marzo por el ministerio de Salud y difundida el lunes,

la ministra Caroline Chang derogó el acuerdo con el que concedió personería jurídica a la organización en abril de 1989 por considerar que “ha incumplido los fines para los que fue creada, sin que las acciones dentro del campo de la salud hayan sido coordinadas con esta cartera de estado”.

No se señalan detalles sobre acciones específicas de incumplimientos. Sin la personería jurídica ninguna organización puede funcionar legalmente en el país.

En un comunicado, Acción Ecológica rechazó la decisión con la que “nos encontramos perplejos” y aseguró que la medida “es inconstitucional”.

Recordó que “lo importante, para nosotros y nosotras es: defender los recursos naturales, preservar un ambiente sano, defender los derechos de la naturaleza”, como señala la Constitución.

Los funcionarios de la organización permanecían en sus oficinas y estudiaban acciones legales ante la decisión gubernamental y no hicieron comentarios ante una llamada de AP.

Recientemente, el gobierno tomó una decisión similar contra la Asociación Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos (ALDHU), que tenía sede en Quito, y que se trasladó a Montevideo. □



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